

CLIMAX

EXCITING STORIES FOR MEN

MAR.

BONUS BOOK-LENGTH FEATURE

LINDA

By JOHN D. MAC DONALD

STRANGE RENDEZVOUS

THE JAPANESE SUB HAD
THE LCI CHECKMATED

LEAK IN PROJECT EMILY

HOW THEY GOT LUCKY LUCIANO

THE RUSTLERS' NIGHTMARE
HILLS FULL OF WOMEN

STILL 25¢



Are you suffering from TIRED LOVE?

After fifteen years of marriage, it somehow seemed as though our love had grown "tired." I suddenly realized that I had nearly forgotten what real happiness was like. "What kind of a life is this?" I'd ask myself. And I'd wonder what had happened to those exciting years when my husband and I were so much in love, so eager to be together.

I'd get up in the morning, drag myself through my daily chores, then take an afternoon nap until my husband came home from work. But I never seemed to have the strength and energy he used to admire. I wondered what was wrong with me.

Then one day I saw a Vitasafe ad that explained why people may become tired and run-down because of a vitamin-mineral deficiency in their diets. It told how thousands of men and women had increased their pep and energy by taking just one Vitasafe High-Potency Capsule every day. Since a trial 30-day supply was offered, I decided to mail the coupon.

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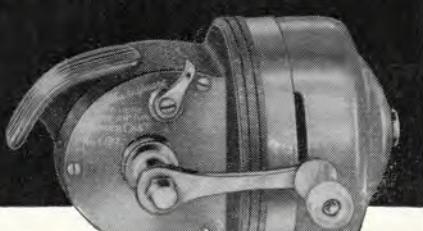
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CLIMAX

EXCITING STORIES FOR MEN

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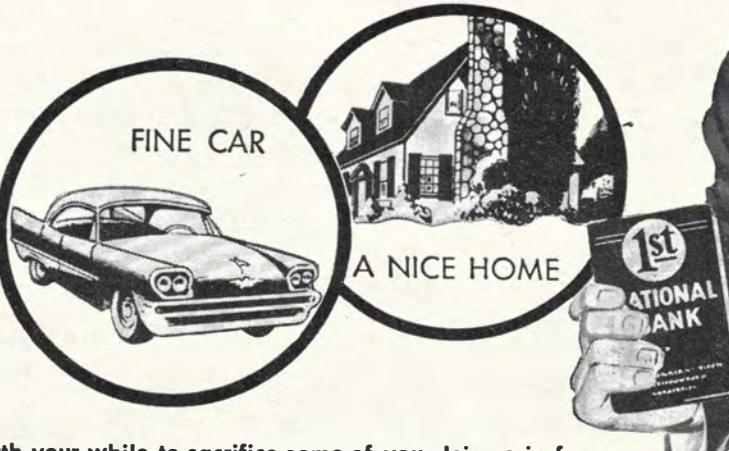
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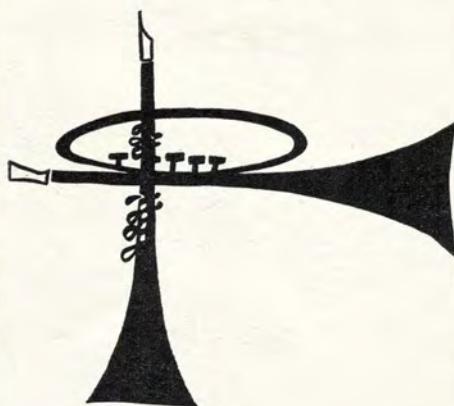
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The New Records

By SAM GOODY

First, a word of warning. If you don't want to spend the \$100 or so which is all that might be necessary to convert your present hi-fi set into stereo sound, then at least buy stereo cartridges—containing special needles—if you insist on playing stereo records on your present equipment. In this way you will not hurt your stereo record, and you'll find that even hi-fi records sound better played through a stereo cartridge.

Second, steer clear of phony stereo. True stereo is specially recorded on a double-soundtrack. Some dishonest characters are popping up in the recording business who will try to gimmick up records (monaural) that were originally recorded on a single track, to make them sound like stereo. Your best way to avoid this is to buy only records made by companies with a good rep in the hi-fi field, and from a dealer whose recommendations you can trust.

A firm that is shooting for the top bracket in Stereo recordings is Everest Records, with its new total fidelity sound made possible by their exclusive Belock-Engler Equalization method of reproducing. We recommend their LPBR-5011, "Mike Todd's Broadway," a musical cavalcade from his hit shows with excellent musical values by JACK SAUNDERS; in jazz, Everest's LPBR-5009, "Chubby Takes Over," with CHUBBY JACKSON, WOODY HERMAN and orchestra, and in the "different" category, their "Musical Variations in Stereo," featuring a sampling of every type of recording they make in Stereo.

MGM has put out a couple of Stereo offerings that are great, and both star MAURICE CHEVALIER. One is "Theme Songs of the Great Swing Bands," with LeRoy Holmes and Orchestra (MGM Stereo E3708) and the other is "Dance Music in the Jimmy Lanin Manner," (MGM Stereo E3705).

If you like Sports, and who doesn't, get Columbia's "The Thrill of Sports," which are dressing room scenes in various notable sports, backstage glimpses of sports personalities in their big or sad moments and is

the kind of collector's item every sports aficionado wishes for. This one has the last day of the 1951 baseball season, after the NY Giants and Brooklyn Dodgers had played; a remarkable commentary by Jesse Owens on his triumph over Hitlerism in the 1936 Olympics; the voices of such past stars as Babe Ruth, Bill Tilden, Knute Rockne and others, and highlights from the two Louis-Schmeling fights. What more can you ask?

And to be really different, we recommend the "first" of an entire large-cast night-club show, that of Offbeat Records' doing the "Demi-Dozen" show as it was played on the floor of a New York night club. Offbeat Records, whose slogan is "Esoterica for Everyman," already has won a sizable reputation for its efforts in capturing the unusual in talent, music and spoken entertainment. It is a brand-new company, having started only in 1958. The same outfit also issues a classical line under the label of Washington Records.

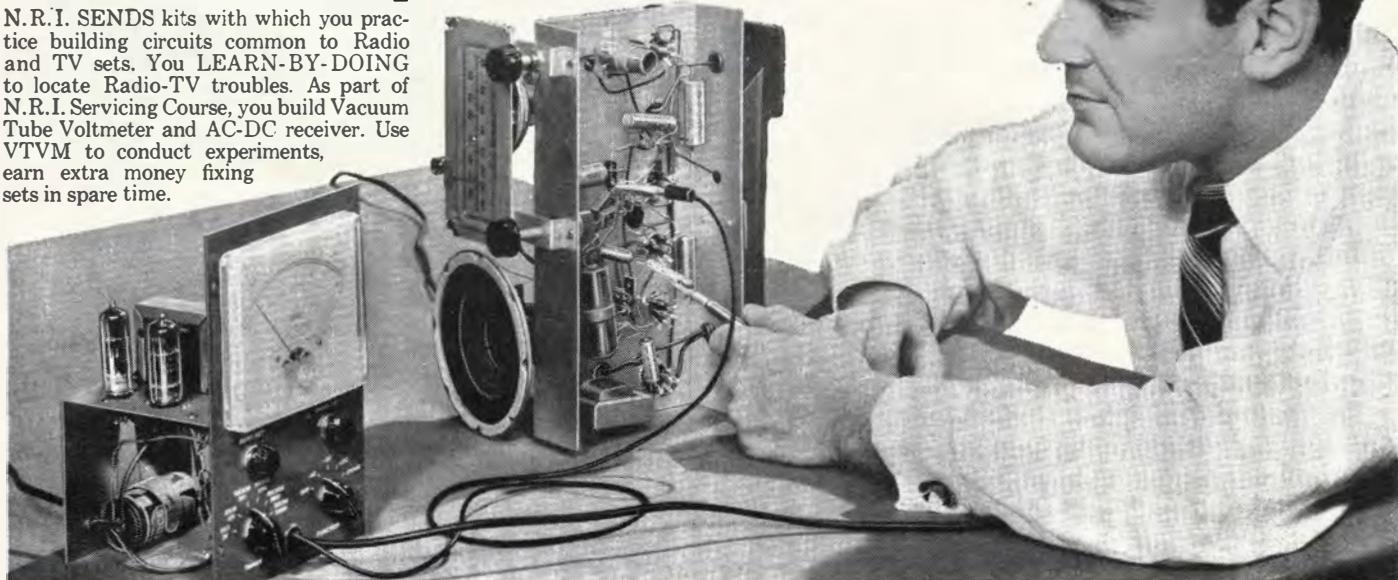
The interesting thing about records is that you discover TV is not the only perfect entertainment medium. Record artists who come across just as well, even if you can't see them, include such people as STAN FREBERG, HOAGY CARMICHAEL and ABBE LANE. Some of Freberg's funniest satires come under the "pop" label because they are on popular ideas: high-pressure advertising, Westerns, hi-fi, panel discussions, and they can all be found in "The Best of the Stan Freberg Shows" via Capital Records. Kapp's album, "Old Buttermilk Sky" has the lanky composer-entertainer running through his own songs, and doing it very well. And if you like a pin-up gal with a sexy voice, try the Lane Girl's "The Lady in Red" via RCA-Victor. And if you're a JULIE LONDON fan, you can get more of the kind of singing that sold so well under "Julie is Her Name" by getting her encore under the same title, Volume Two, via Liberty.

Write to Sam Goody, c/o Climax, or at 236 West 49th St. N.Y.C., if you have any questions to be answered.)

Learn Radio-Television

Servicing or Communications by Practicing at Home in Spare Time

N.R.I. SENDS kits with which you practice building circuits common to Radio and TV sets. You LEARN-BY-DOING to locate Radio-TV troubles. As part of N.R.I. Servicing Course, you build Vacuum Tube Voltmeter and AC-DC receiver. Use VTVM to conduct experiments, earn extra money fixing sets in spare time.



RADIO-TV BROADCASTING (see above) offers important positions as Operators and Technicians. RADIO-TV SERVICING Technicians (see below) needed in every community. Their services are respected, their skill appreciated.



N.R.I. TRAINED THESE MEN FOR SUCCESS



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"Doing spare time repairs on Radio and TV. Soon servicing full time." CLYDE HIGGINS, Waltham, Mass.

"I had a successful Radio repair shop. Now I'm Engineer for WHPE." V.W. WORKMAN, High Point, N.C.



"There are a number of NRI graduates here. I can thank NRI for this job." JACK WAGNER, Lexington, N.C.

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J. E. SMITH
Founder

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Soon after enrolling, many NRI students start to earn \$10, \$15 a week in spare time fixing sets. Some pay for their training and enjoy extra luxuries this way. Some make enough to start their own Radio-TV shops. NRI training is *practical*—gets quick results. Easy to understand, well illustrated lessons teach you basic principles. And you LEARN-BY-DOING by practicing with kits of equipment which "bring to life" things you study.

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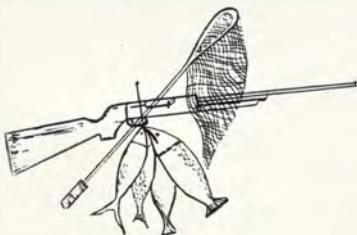
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THE OUTDOORSMAN

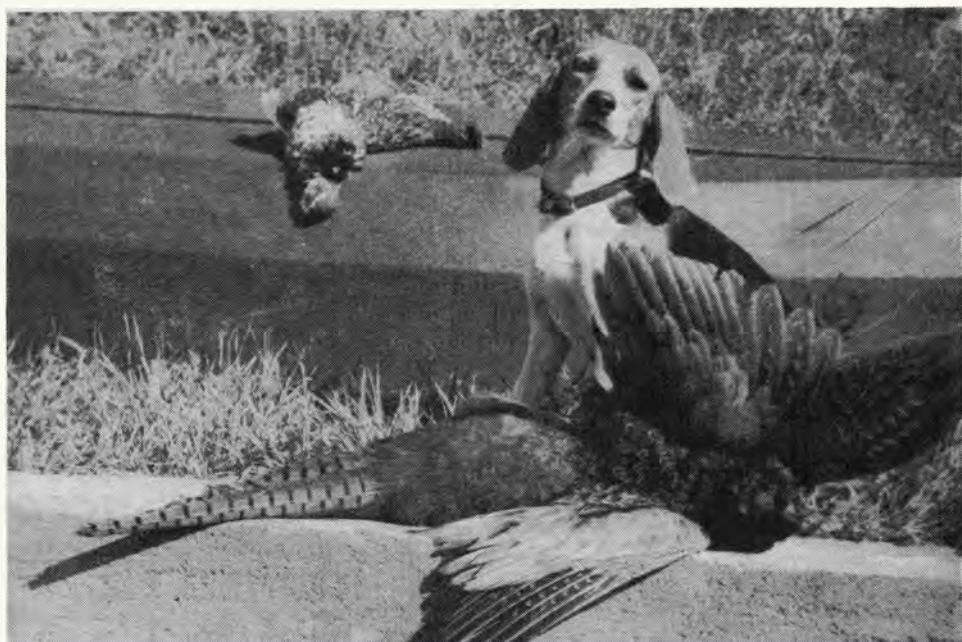
The Wandering Pheasant

ONE of my readers, who has his home in South Dakota and goes to Alberta frequently during the shooting seasons, writes in a genial pity because I spoke, somewhere or other, about a hard hunt in New York State that turned out well, in my opinion, since I finished the day with one cock pheasant. This caused his pity. He wrote to me about a typical day in his native covers where the cock pheasants are plentiful as sparrows in my backyard.

The letter is genial enough, as I said, but there's a hint of something else in it. He invites me out there next season to have some really good shooting and he also wonders why the Northeast is so far behind the Middle West and West in producing such attractive game birds as the wild, strong-flying pheasant.

I've had the pleasure of blowing a shell or two in his State, and in Alberta, too, but it just happens—by accident of birth—that I am used to hunting along the Atlantic coast and in the northern counties of New York, especially Cayuga, where the pheasant shoot is a good one. Even in the other parts of the Northeast, where the birds are scarce, it still is good fun to hunt them and I have the idea that the very scarcity of birds has something to do with the fun. I don't think I'd like to shoot pheasants in a country where they are so abundant that a man may shoot "into the brown," which is the English phrase for just blasting away without need of aiming.

What I should like to know is this: what makes the pheasant breed so well, and grow so strong in certain States? It is really remarkable that there should exist such wide differences. Some men say that if there is control of predators, such as foxes, skunks, possums and raccoons, the pheasants will get such a good start that they will overcome all difficulties. It is certainly true that many pheasants are lost in the nesting season because



of possums and 'coons. Like the skunks, these egg-eaters wander about at night and show a lot of hunting skill in finding the hen on her nest. I've even heard it said that they wait until there's a full clutch, but that's just one of those fine tales that can't be proved.

Of course, the classic example of pheasants flourishing in our continent is the famous Pelee Island, Canada, where a most extraordinary breed of pheasants has been doing well for years. This success is generally attributed to the absence of predators on that island. There isn't a fox left in the covers or in the farmyards; nor is there found even one raccoon or possum. All animals that might kill pheasants are rigidly controlled; and, since that is the chief difference between the island and other regions, it seems reasonable to attribute the well-being of the birds to the absence of their enemies in this controlled area.

Yet there is something more, much more, to success in breeding pheasants in wild covers. Among the most im-

portant elements in pheasant culture is the mineral content of the soil. If a bird can draw from the gravel and earth the proper materials for health, it will breed well and will prove to be a strong-flying game bird. I believe considerable stress was placed on this problem of mineral content by scientists working in Montana some years ago.

In their publications, or in others, I read that there were thirty-two varieties of pheasants in the United States and Canada. Although some of these varied only in minute ways, there were inward differences of a more pronounced character in the birds. Bearing in mind that the pheasant is an exotic bird, imported to this continent from England, Europe, and from its natural home in Asia, it may be accepted as true that the bird, as we see it, owes its coloration and strength to the food and minerals of its Asiatic habitat. I mean that I don't think it changed much when it was in the hands of the Roman breeders, and there is evidence that (Continued on page 8)

NEXT ISSUE

When Dr. Tom Dooley was discharged from the Navy in 1955, he was haunted by the death and disease he had seen in the Viet Nam jungles. His stateside practice seemed trivial compared to the plight of the desperate natives who lived within a rifle shot of Red China's Bamboo Curtain. Recruiting his ex-Navy medical corpsmen, using his own money, and with supplies and equipment that he begged or borrowed, Dooley went back into the jungle. Operating by the light of miner's lamps on their hats, easing pain and fighting malnutrition, Dooley's "ambassadors" gained more good will than an army of official diplomats. Their stirring story, "The Edge of Tomorrow," will appear in CLIMAX next month.

* * *

Six Marines planted the American flag on wind-swept Mt. Suribachi on Iwo Jima. Ira Hayes, a Pima Indian, was in the middle of this historic event. He was proud to be a Marine and anxious to bring honor to his race, but he didn't want to be a phony hero. When they took him out of combat and sent him on a war bond tour he became one of the war's most tragic victims. Read about "The Reluctant Hero of Iwo Jima" in next month's issue of CLIMAX.

* * *

Harry Hunter's divorce gave him what he had always yearned for. He found himself a well-stacked mistress. Best of all, she had her own place. She liked to cook for him, bring him drinks and when bedtime came—well, it was the deal of a lifetime. But, there was one hitch. Read the story of "Harry Hunter's Mistress" in the April CLIMAX.

* * *

At your newsstands
February 26th

THE OUTDOORSMAN

(Continued from page 6)

the pheasants of England, for the most part, are just like their progenitors, imported centuries ago.

BECAUSE of deterioration in the breeds, and because of sudden plagues that killed birds in farms and in the wild, there was always a good deal of thinking going on about their diet. Foods in this country could be fairly matched with foods in other lands, but it was accepted that in the seeds of wild plants, which the pheasant likes, there were differences in mineral content and in other qualities. Somewhere along the line, it was finally decided that an analysis of soils from the Asiatic habitats might lead to some valuable findings. Samples of soils were obtained from remote provinces of China and from other regions where pheasants had originated.

When these soil samples arrived at the laboratories in this country, the biologists had already prepared descriptions of the soils where pheasants had succeeded. They also had analyzed soils where the pheasant had done poorly. Since the origin of certain varieties was known in a general geographic sense, it was decided that an effort should be made to find in our country a soil similar in chemical content to the soil of the bird's original habitat.

At this point, my recollection of the experiments comes to an end, but the memory is refreshed by the letters of two men in the West who seem to know a lot about the pheasant culture. They believe that the variety of pheasant found in South Dakota and in Alberta is a variety that finds especial benefit from the particular values of the soil. They then give various reasons why the soil of Alberta closely resembles, chemically, the soil of certain Asian countries.

One of the letters says that the long wandering of the pheasant is principally due to its hunger and search for a particular combination of salts and irons in the soil. He believes that this search may even become exhausting in nature when the pheasant is driven too far in its search. Incidentally, he explains why it is that the pheasant, at times, will live quite happily in a city or very near to it. He points out

that they frequent ash dumps and will spend a long time searching the ashes for something or other. He ascribes this search to the presence in the dumps of many kinds of ashes and many combinations of minerals.

For my part, I've always thought that the pheasants were looking for the cockle burrs, so often found in dumps. These burrs contain a seed that the pheasant likes. And yet there is something quite sound in the idea of a search for the proper mineral content. I recall that some years ago, while on our way to open the pheasant season in Cayuga County, we were astonished at the numbers of cock pheasants that we found feeding very close to the new highway on which we were driving. They were instinctively drawn to something they needed.

My partner thought that the birds were feeding on the weeds that grow up so quickly when a highway is built. A little later on, when we picked up another gunner who was furnishing the dogs for the shoot, we spent the afternoon watching the pheasants.

By the keenest kind of work with field glasses, and by coming very close to the birds, we found that they were searching the gravel and crushed stone that had been used in making the road. Where these materials had been graded off and scattered along the roadside, the pheasants were feeding briskly in places where all the materials used in road-making had been prepared and put into place. The sharpest watch failed to show a pheasant working on the seeds of the newly-grown plants.

SINCE this observation was made in the county I mentioned—Cayuga—we came to the conclusion that the pheasants were doing well there because they could always find, in the soil itself, the same minerals that they sought in the road-making materials. In fact, it appeared that the rich and varied soil of Cayuga County resembled the soil on which that variety of pheasant had developed ages ago. Perhaps some day we will learn how the soils resemble each other, and then another contribution to the culture of pheasants may be discovered to increase their numbers.

* THE END



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These two important honors conferred on Duraclean give PROOF of your superior services. As a Duraclean Dealer, you will be the only cleaning service in town backed by both these famous seals. No wonder customers buy Duraclean so quickly!

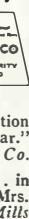


What Manufacturers Say

" . . . (Duraclean) standards in keeping with service to which . . . carpets and consumer are entitled." —Avisco (American Viscose Corp.)

" . . . superior to any on-location process with which I'm familiar." —President, Modern Tufting Co.

" . . . we approve this process . . . in keeping with better service to Mrs. Housewife." —Aldon Rug Mills



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addition to those listed below, you are backed by a national ad program which is larger than all other similar programs in the industry combined. Ads dramatizing your unique services, of which there are five, reach millions of homeowners through leading magazines pictured above (left). Furniture stores, dept. stores, dry cleaners, decorators who can turn over customers to you are targeted through key trade journals shown above (right). You also get promotional materials to tie-in with this national campaign in your town.

This is a sound, lifetime business which you can build from part-time to full-time, and then further expand by hiring servicemen. Alert dealers gross \$9.00 hourly plus \$6.00 on each serviceman at national price scale. Business quickly established. No shop needed. All work done with portable equipment in homes, offices, hotels, theatres, etc. Everything furnished to get you started.

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Duraclean cleans by *absorption*, utilizing an electric Foamovator which produces a light aerated foam. When spread onto rug fibers or upholstery fabrics, chemicals in the foam safely and gently loosens the soil and absorbs it like a blotter absorbs ink. It is then held in suspension for easy removal. There's no soaking or scrubbing, thus eliminating the risk of shrinkage, color run or dry rot. This unique method revitalizes fibers, restores color and adds years to their life and beauty. Most customers are so enthused they tell friends. And they appreciate the convenience of "on location" cleaning which enables them to use furnishings again the same day.

A COMPLETE SERVICE: You offer 4 other services, thereby multiplying profits. Soil retarding: Invisible film coats fiber tips against dirt, keeping furnishings clean months longer. Mothproofing: Backed by International 6-year warranty. Flameproofing: Reduces fire damage. Theatres, hotels, etc. offer huge potential. Spotting: Chemicals enable you to handle most all spot or staining problems.

EASY TERMS: Moderate payment establishes your business—pay balance from sales. We furnish everything. If needed, we help finance you.

What Dealers Say

W. Lookebill (St. Louis): My 28th year! Began during depression and built business on good service.

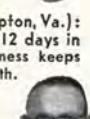


D. Chilcott (N. Platte): Duraclean say gross \$9.00 per hour. I gross up to \$12.00. Many dealers do much better.

M. Lyons (Chgo): 3rd year should hit \$100,000; 2nd was \$60,000; 1st \$40,000. Hdqtrs help make it possible.



E. Roddey (Hampton, Va.): Did \$600.00 first 12 days in January. My business keeps growing each month.



A. Wilson (Tulsa): Made \$1,299 this month working alone. Duraclean outperforms all competitors.

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THE MAILBOX



THEORIES ON CADET COX . . .



I am a better plumber than a detective, but my hunch is that a lot of people are off the beam. It seems to me that Cox was trying to confess a murder committed in Germany . . . George—or "Sarge"—was on his trail to blackmail him, for he knew about the missing German girl and wanted to cash in. His (Cox's) sense of guilt was bothering him, and when George arrived things got too hot. George couldn't afford to make his presence known to the police, lest he be linked with the murder and the attempted blackmail . . . The personal effects Cox left in his room were a plant intended to throw lawmen off his trail. The law is correct that Cox is alive but it cannot arrest him without evidence. Time works in his favor . . .

Edwin Glaze
Grand Junction, Colo.

Edwin, you are a better plumber than a detective. If the authorities knew where Cox was, they would nab him, believe us. On the other hand, you may be a better "whodunit" writer than a plumber. If you turn out a good one, CLIMAX may buy it.

HERMAN'S BRAINWAVES . . .

I thoroughly enjoy your magazine. In the story "The Rise And Fall of Herman Goering" Jack Pearl's study of Goering is clever and shows a grasp of psychology. The foundation of his analysis is based, however, on facts from some other person's life. Early photos of Unteroffizier Goering show that he was quite thin. (And) on the Wechsler-Bellevue Scale (a mental test—Ed.) Goering scored an I.Q. of 142, (which is) extremely high. (The test) also differentiates between the sane and insane . . . Goering had a tremendous amount of energy.

Daniel G. Griffin
Richardson, Texas

And we thoroughly enjoyed your letter. But we missed a few items, like: How did Herman come out on the sanity test? As for energy, he used it in the service of a ruling clique which murdered millions of people. Perhaps these facts somewhat colored Mr. Pearl's view when he called Herman "fat." Possibly, "fathead" would have been a better word.

TAKE IT OFF . . .



certain young lady in "Sights For Tired Eyes" named Ellen Reidel. I certainly would like to see some more of her.

Wayne D. Sharpe S/A
San Diego, Calif.

Sorry, Wayne, but we showed as much of Ellen as the censors would allow.

ROCK 'N' ROLL



I have been in the Navy for three years and ten months and have had my share of sea duty. Letter-writer Sid Levy, who doubted that any ship could record a 35-degree roll on its clinometer, as mentioned in Bob Lund's "The Story Of An Unsung Hero," CLIMAX, August, 1958, has heard too much scuttle-butt. As a quartermaster aboard the U.S.S. *Ticonderoga* on May 6 and 7, 1957, in a storm off Cape Horn, I saw the clinometer register rolls of 34 and 38 degrees. Later, on the U.S.S. *Benham*, I have seen rolls of 45 to 57 degrees.

Roy Spurgin, Jr. S/N
Chelsea, Mass.

How does that stack up with Elvis?

In the December CLIMAX there was a

How You Can Find A Fortune In Old Coins!

Many Common U. S. Coins Are Worth Far More Than Face Value!

Read how nickels, dimes, and quarters—the very change in your pocket right now, could make you rich. This is no fairy tale! You, too, may be letting a fortune slip through your fingers without realizing it!

Here is HOW to SPOT the coins that are worth thousands of dollars

NEXT time you jingle the change in your pocket, think twice. You could be touching the coin that will bring you a fortune in the fabulous "old money" market!

Last year alone, at auctions and dealers, millions of dollars were paid for old coins that someone, not necessarily a coin expert, had sense enough to spot. A lady shopping at the corner store noticed an odd looking quarter in her change. A youth rummaging in the attic, came across a funny looking silver dollar in an old trunk. A father saving pennies in a jar for his youngster found a rarity. It could happen to you . . . if you know what to look for!

Are you OVERLOOKING coins that could make you rich?

Valuable coins are all around us. Could you recognize a coin for what it is worth? Now, a new book tells all you need to know about every U. S. coin ever minted. "Fell's Official United States Coin Book" is one of the most complete guides of its type ever published.

Special Note to those who handle a good deal of money

If you are a bank teller, cashier, store-keeper, ticket-seller, etc., you handle many coins daily. A percentage of them probably have Extra Value! Learn what coins are valuable! Learn to spot and recognize them. You may find and earn extra dollars—possibly a fortune—if you keep your eyes open!

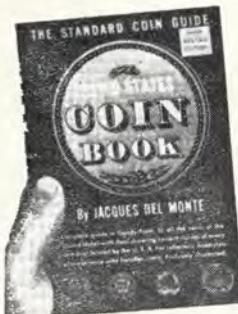
It describes in detail the entire lucrative business of collecting, classifying and selling coins for a profit. 17 fact-packed chapters

give the value of all U. S. coins from the earliest Colonial times to present. Describes how to start a collection; how to invest and speculate in coins; how to spot the coins that mean BIG money. Numismatics, the science of coins, is an educational hobby that interests and delights young and old. This book will give you a thorough understanding of every angle of coin collecting, coin buying and selling, coin values, coin know-how.

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United States Coin Book



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- How to look for valuable coins
- How to sell coins to dealers
- How to start a coin collection that will make your children rich
- Exact value of every U. S. (and possessions) coin ever minted.
- How to speculate in coins for sure profit
- Coin laws and regulations
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—Also lists the most popular coins; charts, coins and values. Thousands of facts on making money with coins—all in one easy-to-read volume.

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MERCURY DIMES, 1916D

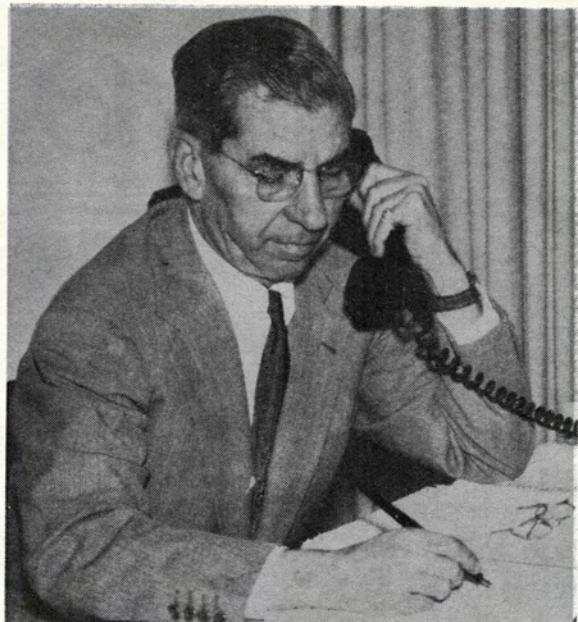
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HOW THEY GOT LUCKY LUCIANO

The law and the mob knew him only as "Charlie," and he ran the rackets so quietly, he was invisible. Then ex-choirboy Dewey toppled his \$20,000,000 empire

By THOMAS J. NAUGHTON

THE DOOR of the speakeasy snapped open and two men stepped into the smoky interior. Kicking the door shut, they looked slowly around the dingy room. No one moved. The men in the room—and a few women—stared hypnotized at the two black-coated figures, each holding a submachine gun cradled in his arm.

Lifting his gun, one of the invaders said in a low, clear voice: "In the corner. The old guy."

With the first shockingly loud blast, everyone in the place scrambled for cover, under tables, behind the flimsy bar, anywhere. The gunfire stopped abruptly, and for an instant the room was silent again. Then came a long, retching groan and the soft thud of a body falling to the floor. The door opened, slammed shut, and from outside came a quick scuffle of feet, followed by the roar of a car engine which faded swiftly into the distance.

Slowly and warily, a stocky, swarthy young man crawled out from under a round table in one corner of the room. His face was expressionless, except for a sullenness caused by a drooping right eyelid. He looked around the room, alert and watchful, meeting the eyes of



others as they got up from the floor. Then he glanced down at his feet, where the body of a gray-haired man lay in patches of slow-spreading blood.

A young tough knelt beside the body, touched it and looked up fearfully. "The Boss—"

"Dead," the swarthy young man said bluntly. "Get up. He's done for."

"The Boss," another man said, shaking his head unbelievingly. "Joe Masseria, dead. Jesus—"

"Shut up," the swarthy young man told him. "He's been askin' for it for years. There'll be another boss." He grunted, and a faint smile curled his lips. "Soon, too."

"Whoever did this—" The young tough raised a fist angrily. "I swear—"

"Listen, stupid," the swarthy man said, "you go around talkin' like that, maybe you'll be next." He glared around the room. "Now, quit the gab and somebody call the cops."

The bartender shakily picked up the phone and called the police. When he hung up, the young man nodded and slapped a bill on the bar. "Come on," he said, waving an arm. "Have another drink while you got the chance." He glanced around, a half-smile on his heavy-lipped mouth. "To the boss—the new one."

The police never learned who killed Joe Masseria. There were, of course, all kinds of whispers going up and down the crowded streets of New York's Lower East Side, and especially among the tough, cold-eyed members of the *Unione Siciliana*, the Mafia-like organization of which Masseria had been the head. But they led nowhere. For Masseria had been an old-style gang leader, rough and ruthless, personally involved in any number of rackets, fights, feuds and beatings. He was known to

everyone and hated by many, safe only so long as nobody tougher than himself came along. And somebody tougher than old Joe Masseria had finally come along.

Among the runners and collectors for the Italian lottery, the dope-pushers in shadowy hallways, the goons running dozens of little rackets among fearful shopkeepers, the question of who had killed the old boss was much less important than the question: "What happens now?"

They didn't have to wait long for an answer. Almost before Masseria's body was cold, the runners and the pushers and the musclemen had a new boss. But there was a difference. Only the higher echelons knew who he was—the swarthy young man with the drooping eyelid, Charlie Luciano, more affectionately known as "Lucky." For more than a year, Luciano had been close to the old boss, and he hadn't been wasting his time. By the time Masseria was killed, Lucky knew the whole operation nearly as well as Masseria had, and far better than any other of his lieutenants. Shrewd as well as tough, Luciano avoided the small fry. The punks and goons had known the old boss well; they never saw the new one. All they got was a name—mysterious, commanding, powerful. The name was Charlie Lucky. Later it was shortened to Charlie. And on the Lower East Side, the word from Charlie became the law.

A few months earlier or a few months later, Luciano's takeover might have been impossible. But this was late 1931, and Judge Samuel Seabury's sweeping investigation of corruption in New York was disrupting the old political alliances. It even reached into the office of Mayor Walker. It was a nervous time for racketeers.

For years the leaders of the *Unione Siciliana* had

After his deportation to Italy, Luciano slipped secretly into Havana but was immediately returned by the Cuban government.



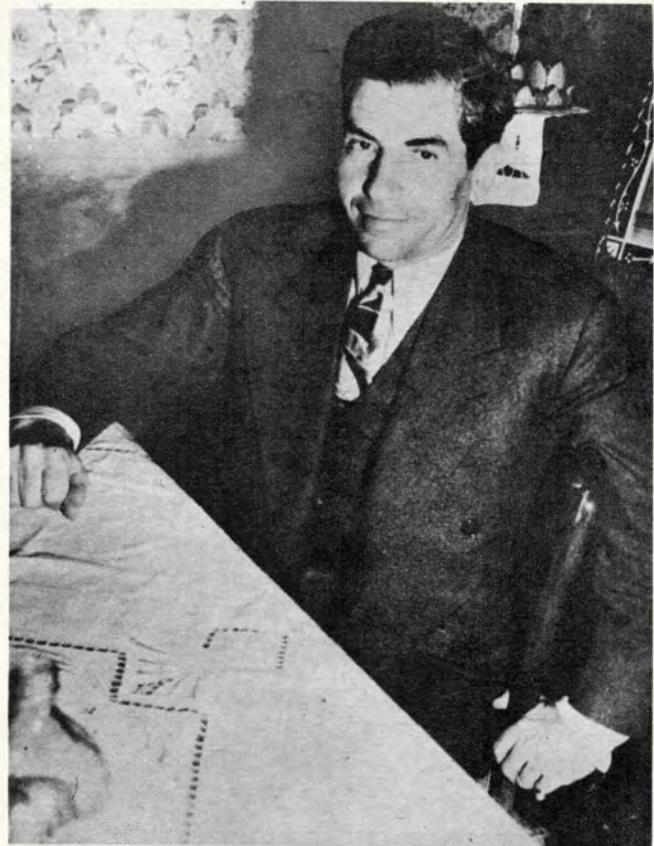
been operating in smug security, protected by politicians whose influence reached to every level of the city government. Now, politicians were disappearing one after another; into jail, into nursing homes, into exile, as the blazing glare of the Seabury investigation probed dark corners. Joe Masseria himself would have been bewildered by this shifting, dangerous situation, and the men who had worked for him were badly scared. The only one who remained cool was Luciano; and the others were only too glad to have somebody tell them what to do.

For some months Luciano busied himself tightening his organization and removing himself even farther from any contact with the rank and file. The Italian lottery was smaller than the numbers racket in Harlem, but it was as profitable and it worked much the same way. Its insignificance kept it safe, and Luciano made no attempt to build it up. Dope, with the police force being shaken up practically every other week, was even safer than it had been before. The protection racket was still safe, for it didn't depend on anything but raw force. Dutch Schultz and Waxey Gordon had most of the big beer and whiskey bootlegging trade in the city; Luciano was content to let them keep it. There were some interesting possibilities in labor unions, and he spent some time looking into them. There was also some talk about organizing prostitution, but that one he was determined to let strictly alone. As for big-time crap games and horse rooms, which couldn't run at all without police protection, the word for the time being was, "lay off."

Quietly putting his various enterprises in order, Luciano was a model of brisk efficiency. He had, as he liked to tell himself proudly, a real talent for administration, backed up by wide and useful experience. At 33, he had been a racketeer and gambler half his life. He had done time in jail only once—for peddling dope, when he was 18. Since then he had been arrested perhaps a dozen times—assault, carrying a deadly weapon, gambling, odds and ends like that—but except for one \$1,000 fine slapped on him in Miami, all the other charges had been dismissed.

Aside from the dope-peddling rap when he was a mere punk, he had made only three mistakes. One was when he got mixed up with a girl who gave him a case of syphilis; the cure was long and hard, and he hadn't had much use for women since. The second was when he offended some rivals, who took him out to Staten Island, beat him up and left him for dead. One relic of that night was the drooping right eyelid; another was the nickname, Lucky, pinned on him because he came out of it alive.

As the months went by, step by step Luciano perfected his organization. To his new lieutenants he delegated some authority—but never too much. Joe Masseria had let one man learn everything. Luciano did not make the same mistake. Shrewdly he selected ten or 12 trusted lieutenants. Then, removing himself from actual operations, he chose two—Little Davy Betillo and Tom Pennochio, also known as Tommy the Bull—as his principal aides. From them he got detailed reports; to them alone, he gave orders. Joe Masseria might have done his own work and fought his own fights, but Luciano chose to be an executive and have others do the work for him. As the lines of authority were clarified and the teamwork smoothed out, it became as unthinkable for Luciano to take a personal hand in any ordinary operation as it would be for the head of General (Continued on page 74)



After his second deportation, in 1947, Luciano traveled to Naples where he started a medical equipment business.

Restricted in his movements by the Italian police, Luciano this year requested that the court make him a "free citizen."





THE DOUBLE STANDARD

Garver had a beautiful wife, but he was obsessed with fantasies of long-limbed wantons. Then in an earthy Mexican border town he found that two can play the twisted game of love

By EDWIN SHRAKE



GARVER Wheatley sat on the edge of the bed and watched his wife force herself into a girdle. The sight still stimulated him after 15 years. She hooked her thumbs into the sides of the girdle, frowned at her naked image in the mirror, and pulled, shaking her head so that her brown ponytail flapped against her smooth shoulders. Garver thought Mariane looked even better than she had on the evening they were married in the college chapel. He sighed and looked away, glancing up at the creaking overhead fan that barely stirred the warm air. His eyes strayed out the window. The blazing sun bouncing up off the white walls of the courtyard made him squint. The

foliage around the fountain shone rich green as droplets of spray were burned off the leaves.

"I bet that sun could kill a man," Garver said. "You don't see any Mexicans out in it. Why don't we just stay around here until it gets dark?"

With a final effort Mariane pulled the girdle over her hips and snapped the elastic against her resisting flesh. She shrugged and padded gracefully to the nightstand for a cigarette. "What kind of an anniversary trip is that?" she said. "I didn't come to Mexico to sprawl around in bed and sweat all day. Let's get out and see some things."

"I guess you're right," Garver said. "I hear there's plenty of hot-looking girls down here. I ought to give them the eye, hey, honey?"

"Listen, Garver," Mariane said, fastening her brassiere. "Remember what we were talking about on the highway? Anything you can do, I can do. Men don't have any rights that women don't have. The double standard is dead, remember?"

Her mature bosom swelled over the top of the brassiere and Garver sighed. "Aw, honey, didn't you see me wink?" he said.

Mariane slipped into a low-cut white dress, and put on her spike-heeled shoes. She clipped on white shell earrings. Garver looked at her admiringly. Her eyes were blue-green and her skin was very white. She had a little-girl expression that contrasted provocatively with the ripeness of her body.

Back home Garver had often marveled, as he watched her leave for one of her club meetings, at how much like a little girl she looked, demure and almost prim, with a little hat perched on her head. Then he would remember how she had been the night before, heavy-lidded, passionate, all woman. She was like a child who looked as if she wanted to be wicked, and it made her all the more desirable.

"You didn't wink," she said. "I know you. The first time you have a couple of drinks and a girl smiles at you, you'll be off after her like a bird dog."

"I thought we weren't going to fight," Garver said uncomfortably.

"I'm not fighting," Mariane said. She dabbed perfume on her temples, wrists and between her breasts. "Tell me, darling, what would you really think if I went to bed with another man? Would it hurt you very much?"

Garver was shocked. He stood up. He was a tall man with a thickening middle, a golf-course tan and sun-bleached, close-cropped hair. His lips were thin, his jaw full, his nose slightly awry since that day playing tennis when he had tumbled headlong on the asphalt court while jumping over the net.

"That's stupid," he said. "I don't want to talk about it. Let's go."

Mariane put out her cigarette and moved past him in her white dress. Her perfume had the subtle scent of narcissus.

They went out of the room and down into the courtyard. As they passed a gate in the stone wall, Garver looked into the street. Cuidad Acuña was like any border town in July. Heat radiated from the whitewashed buildings and flowed through the streets like a river, washing over the tourists who strolled the narrow walks from shop to shop, smiling grimly beneath their souvenir sombreros. Except for those who made a living off the tourists, the citizens of Acuña were safely indoors, out of the sun. The hottest part of the day was set aside for siesta, and only a *tourista* would go out when the sun was like a flame on his back.

The dining room was 40 feet long; the tables were crowded with weekend visitors from across the border and with travelers who were headed for resorts farther south. The walls were decorated with spurs, sabers, flags, Mexican dolls, bracelets and antique pistols crusted with silver. The head of a bull was mounted above the door that led to the dance floor, where an orchestra played listlessly. Several couples were dancing. The musicians, sweating in their red jackets, stared at the dancers with boredom, no longer amused at people who danced when



Garver stopped, got up from the bed and said to her, "I can't do this, I don't want to. I've got a wife and kids."

they should have been asleep, or at least resting.

Garver found a table beside a fat woman whose wrists clanked with silver. Her escort was a red-faced man who put down his glass of wine at intervals to guffaw and shout: "Olé!"

"Hey pal," he whooped to Garver. "I don't look like a gringo now, do I? Drinking what the natives drink—Dago red!" The fat woman waved her arm at a fly, and the silver bracelets rattled like anchor chains.

"How about going to the bullfights with us tomorrow?" the red-faced man bellowed. "The old lady says it'll make her sick to see them cows get slaughtered. I say anything that can make her sick is worth seeing. Hey, pal?"

"We're leaving for Mexico City in the morning," Garver said. He leaned back to give his order to the waiter.

"Anything you can do in Mexico City, you can do right here on the stinking border," the man said. "Drink, holler and chase long-legged women. *Saludos, amigos!*" He tilted up his glass, and the wine spilled over onto his cheeks and down to the neck of his sport shirt.

"Do you want to dance?" Garver asked Mariane.

"I've had a bath already," she answered. "I don't need another out in that sweatbox."

The waiter brought two platters of broiled chicken covered with melted cheese. Steam rose from the plates, and the food smelled sharply of spices. The waiter put

down a metal dish stacked with tortillas and carefully poured red wine into their glasses. He smiled broadly, although his eyes were half-closed, and he put the wine bottle beside Garver's right hand. Mariane began to eat hungrily. Beads of perspiration were strung around her neck and glistened on her forehead. Garver thought she looked very attractive. But his mind was on what the red-faced man had said about the long-legged women. Garver had always heard that Mexico had beautiful women. He thought of them as noble creatures with long, delicate noses, artistically chiseled cheekbones, red lips, black hair, tan skin and with either a rose or a gardenia in their hair. He wasn't certain which flower it was. They always wore mantillas and white Spanish lace and sat on high balconies, lonely and inaccessible; wonderful creatures, to be admired but not touched.

NOW he thought of the border women, earthier versions of these high-class *señoritas*. The picture that came to his mind was of Carmen, in a peasant blouse and full skirt, her eyes flashing as she whispered to him. He pictured himself with a guitar, strolling in the moonlight. No, that was the wrong picture. He summoned up another fantasy: His heels thundered against the floor of the *cantina* as he danced the flamenco with a dagger in his sash. Yes, that was it. He looked at Mariane appraisingly as she drank her wine, and he wondered if he might be able to slip away from her later.

Garver had never been unfaithful to his wife, although it wasn't entirely because he had never wanted to be. At home, he was afraid; too many things could happen. Garver dreamed about affairs—in technicolor. He would re-live his experiences before he was married, and include in them his secretary or the girl who checked the hats at the Elks Club. Several times, drunk, he had had a chance for the real thing, but he never could bring it off. He didn't know whether it was his own cowardice, or his feeling for Mariane. Both, he guessed.

He was certain she had never been unfaithful to him. She was a warm-blooded woman beneath her layers of *Reader's Digest*, PTA and Togetherness, but affairs were just too difficult to arrange in the suburb where they lived. At parties they played the usual games, carried on the common flirtations and, of course, never sat together. But they always went home together.

"Garver, this is wonderful," Mariane said. "The chicken is umm!—and the wine is delicious!"

"I'm glad you like it, honey," he said. "Just wait until we get to Mexico City. Boy, will we have a time."

The red-faced man and his fat wife got up and waddled toward the dance floor. The woman, with all her jewelry, clanked like a South American general in full dress uniform. The man still wore his sombrero.

Garver watched them for a while, and then, as he glanced around the room, he noticed the American soldiers. Three of them sat at a table beneath a bullfight poster. All wore khaki uniforms, and their hair was clipped close to their skulls. Their foreheads were pale white, but their faces and hands were bronzed. They stared frankly at Mariane. There were four empty wine bottles on their table.

Mariane laughed. "I don't drink wine very often," she said. "What dull lives we lead, Garver. You know it? Utterly dull."

"What do you mean? You never seem to have time for anything. How can it be dull? If it's not the club on Wednesday and Saturday, you're running off to one of

your meetings. And you're always playing bridge."

"Oh, you know what I mean. Sometimes I feel like saying the hell with it and going out and getting drunk and running off with Marlon Brando."

Garver frowned.

"Don't worry, darling," she said. "He wouldn't have me. I'm too fat and old."

"You look fine," Garver said. He was watching the soldiers watching her.

One of the soldiers stood up and wove his way across the crowded room toward them. The musicians swung apathetically into "El Baile Del Sombrero." On the dance floor, the red-faced man threw down his hat and began to hop around it. "Olé!" he shouted. His wife stood and shook her hips and rattled her bracelets. The approaching soldier was a corporal; he grinned crookedly and never took his eyes off Mariane. Garver felt his stomach tighten. He gripped the neck of the wine bottle tightly and then released it. He wondered if he was afraid of the soldier or just afraid of causing a scene.

Mariane finally saw the corporal. His khaki shirt was stained black at the armpits. She was startled, then pleased and a little frightened. Her mouth opened and made a small popping sound.

Garver wished they could both disappear. He touched his pulse and closed his eyes, and when he opened them the corporal was standing over them.

"Would you like to dance, ma'am?" the corporal drawled.

"No, thank you," Mariane said sweetly.

"This is my wife," Garver said, rising.

The corporal turned as if seeing Garver for the first time. He squinted up at Garver for a moment and arched his brows. "I didn't think men brought their wives to Acuna," he said, and walked back to his table.

Garver blinked and looked at Mariane.

"What did he mean by that?" she asked.

"I don't know. He was trying to think of something funny to say. He was awful young."

THEY finished the meal in silence, except when Garver declined the offer of the red-faced man to take them to "a real live bar." When they were through eating, Garver paid the check. He noticed that the wine bottle was empty. Mariane lurched a little when she stood up, and she held onto him for support. He guided her across the dining room toward the bar, aware that the soldiers were still staring at her. The barroom was almost deserted. It was a plain room, not so doggedly quaint as the dining room. Beer cases were stacked in the corner. The bar, itself, was made of wooden planks. The ceiling fan pushed its hot breath on them as Garver seated Mariane at a wooden table. There was one man standing at the bar, a handsome Mexican, about Garver's age, dressed in a white suit. He nodded to them courteously. The bartender, a man with long mustaches, bent over them, smelling of hot peppers.

"Something cool," Mariane said.

"A Planter's Punch?" The bartender grinned. "I make them very good."

"They're pretty strong," Garver said.

"The stronger the better," Mariane said. She leaned back in her chair, and her breasts surged dangerously at the top of her dress. "Let's live a little, darling. It's our anniversary."

"All right, let's live a little," Garver said. "Two of those Planter's Punches." (Continued on page 86)



Laffey's Head

Billy's best pal was missing and Maggie was sure the mysterious box contained the answer. She forgot that curiosity killed the cat

By JAMES McCAGUE

BILLY FOSS, third mate of the cargo ship *Ellie Frye*, was a big, square-set young man and not at all complicated. In fact, he was the last guy in the world you would suspect of hugging a dark secret to his burly chest. Certainly Maggie Satterlee, the barmaid at the Anchor, didn't suspect it, and Maggie knew Billy better than anyone, having serious designs on him.

The night the *Ellie* tied up at Pier 11, just in from Rio, Billy made straight for the Anchor. After a few drinks with the boys, he and Maggie drifted off to a corner of the bar for a little private conversation.

"What you got in the box, Billy-boy?" Maggie asked, her green cat-eyes glowing with interest.

"Ah!" he said, "be smart and don't ask, Maggie."

It was a big box, almost a foot square, made of dark, polished teak. There were heavy brass hinges on the cover and a brass clasp. Maggie was sure it must contain something pretty valuable.

"Come on, honey," she coaxed him.

Billy grinned at her over the foamy rim of his schooner of beer and shook his head.

"A present for me?" She giggled, leaning toward him on dimpled elbows.

"Ah!" he said, reaching out a big, knotty-knuckled hand to catch her soft white one. "There's a present for you, all right, Maggie. Not in the box, though. It's up in my room. Want to come on up with me and see?"

She tossed her head, the thick coppery hair swinging in heavy swirls. "Ain't you the clever one?" she said.

"Real jade earrings, Maggie," he coaxed. "As green as your eyes and just the right color to set off that carrot head of yours. I bargained 'em out of a Chinaman, with nobody but you in mind."

"Did you get a ring off that Chinaman?" she asked tartly. "It'll take a certain kind of a ring to get me up in that room of yours, Mister Joss!"

"Ah, don't be like that, Maggie."

"I know you," she said severely. But she didn't take her hand away. "Come on," she pleaded, "tell me. What's in the box, huh?"

"A secret," he said soberly, shaking his head.

"Billy, tell me!"

"It's the eye out of an Indian idol," he said, leaning even closer to her and lowering his voice. "A genuine, twenty-four-karat ruby, red as blood. When the high priests find it's gone, they'll send a fella to stick a big, long, curvy knife between my ribs. They could be after me right this minute, Maggie!"

"Go on!" she said.

The Anchor was pretty well crowded, full of tobacco smoke and babbling salty talk. A man beside Billy spoke up in a rich London-dock voice: "Could I 'ave another beer, Miss?" And when Maggie flounced away along the bar to get it, he added to Billy: "That's a likely story, mate. I've spent years in India, I 'ave, an' I never seen no ruddy idols with rubies in their 'eads."

"I was kidding her," Billy said shortly.

The Britisher laughed obligingly. "What is in the bloomin' box?" he asked curiously.

Billy shrugged.

"Looks like a chronometer case," the Britisher speculated, cocking a thoughtful eye at it.

"Looks like, maybe, but it ain't," Billy said with finality, swallowing his beer.

"Don't be so ruddy mysterious."

Billy set his schooner down and turned, bristling. "Look, Limey! Mind your own damn business!"

Maggie came back with the beer just then. "Now, here, don't be rude to the man," she told Billy.

"It ain't as if I give a plugged farthin'," the Britisher said indignantly. "I was just makin' conversation, like."

"I'll give you conversation," Billy snapped. "With my fist right in your big Limey snoot!"

"Billy, you quit it, now," Maggie cried. "You know Ricco don't like no rough stuff in his place."

"Ricco!" Billy sneered, turning away from the bar. He picked up the box and tucked it under a thick arm. "Listen, Maggie, I'm gettin' out of this crummy dump. You comin' with me?"

"Honey, you know I can't," she said placatingly, "not till closing time. Come on, now . . ."

"We could go to your place," he suggested hopefully, "if you don't wanna go to mine. I wasn't kiddin' about them earrings."

"Now, I told you about that." She giggled and reached out to pat his cheek. "Come on, shake hands with this English gentleman here and let's all forget it, huh?"

"I'm willin'," the Englishman said with dignity. "No offense taken if you meant none."

Billy sneered and picked up the box. He turned on his heel, thrusting thirsty seafarers right and left as he made for the door. Heads turned angrily in his wake; voices quieted for a moment in the long, smoky room. A curling wisp of fog blew through the door and lingered for a moment as he disappeared.

Maggie stood with her round, smooth arms akimbo, scarlet-nailed hands planted on her intriguing hips. Her mouth was a round, scarlet O of amazement. "Well, get him!" she said.

"Surly bloke," the Britisher observed, lifting his beer. "Well, let 'im go, sweet'eart. I'm still 'ere!"

"But he ain't like that." Maggie frowned. "I don't know what's got into him."

"I'd say 'e was coverin' up somethin'," the Britisher said knowingly. "That ruddy teakwood box! You'd think there was somebody's bloody 'ead in there!"

"Ah, go on!" Maggie scoffed.

"About the right size," he pointed out thoughtfully.

Maggie didn't take the remark seriously, of course. But thoughts of the box nagged at her all the same, along with a worried bewilderment over Billy's nasty behavior. She mentioned it to her boss at closing time.

"He just ain't like that, Ricco. Oh, not that he's one to take guff off anybody—but offering to bust somebody in the nose, just for nothing . . ."

Ricco grunted and nodded the round, black cropped head nestled atop his mountain of blubber. His thick little lips moved silently as he counted out the night's receipts.

"Maybe he should've had (Continued on page 81)



HILLS FULL OF WOMEN

The stage was hauling blondes instead of gold and Mustang's boys wanted something for their trouble. But the girls gave them a lot more than they bargained for

By ALEX AUSTIN

IT WAS late in the afternoon. Six men waited behind the high rocks near Eagle Gorge, 15 miles east of Corpus Christi, watching the stage coming closer, a thin cloud of dust in its wake.

"You figger it's about twenty thousand, huh?" Jeb Tracy asked the man at his side.

Mustang Mabry Gray nodded. He had a dark, sullen face, deep eyes, heavy brows, and a square chin that

looked as if it had been chiseled from rock. He answered in a slow, deliberate voice. "Should he at least that. It's a government shipment."

Jeb Tracy grinned, showing his rotten front teeth. "Nice lot of money," he muttered.

The men fell silent as the stage thundered closer. It was about to pass through a narrow defile in the rock, when the six men galloped out, guns in hand. The stage



WALTERHOUSE

pulled up short and the horses started to rear and toss their heads from side to side.

Mustang Gray rode up alongside the stage and called to the driver. "Hand down your gold, and there won't be no trouble. I don't want nobody gettin' hurt when it ain't necessary."

"There ain't no gold on this stage," the driver said. He was a bony, nervous-looking man with a sharp red nose.

"Hey, Mustang!" Andy Walker said, his head inside the stage window. "Look in here!"

Gray turned. "What is it?"

Walker pulled his head out and laughed. "This here ain't no gold shipment," he said.

Mustang turned back to the door, looked in and grinned slowly. "What the hell! Females!"

"You ladies better move out here where we can get a good look at you," Walker said.

"Whoopiee!" Bob Frey shouted as the girls stepped out of the stage one by one. "This is better than gold."

The first was a young, big-hipped, buxom blonde. So was the second. There were six in all, looking like they had been stamped out by a machine. Six blondes, all of them young and pretty. And they weren't scared little girls either, but the sort who knew what a man was all about. They gave back look for look, as calm as you please.

Mustang Gray turned to the men and said, "Andy, you and Bob better search through this damn stage for that gold. It's around someplace."

The two men began tearing the coach apart. The others just sat their mounts, admiring the girls. The blondes, when they saw the appreciative smiles on the men's faces, smiled back coquettishly.

"You figuring on finding some work in Corpus Christi?" Pat Quinn asked. He winked at Jeb Tracy.

"Mebbe they're singers or dancers," Tracy said.

One of the girls stepped forward. "We're heading for Madame Moustache's place there."

The men's smiles widened, and they moved closer. Madame Moustache was one of the leading bordello keepers west of the Mississippi.

Pat Quinn said, "You know, I'm one of the Madame's best customers."

"Well then, you must come visit us when you're in town," the girl said warmly.

ANDY Walker and Bob Frey came out of the stage. "There's nothing in there," Frey said. "We turned it inside out, Mustang."

"Nothing? You sure?"

"Just these little girls, I guess," Frey grumbled.

Jeb Tracy lowered his voice. "Listen here, Mustang, how about just takin' them off with us for a time? We could keep them in camp."

"It'd mean trouble," Gray said.

"No trouble." Jeb stroked his bushy red beard as he spoke. "They'd be there whenever we wanted 'em."

The two men talked it back and forth, while the others kept their eyes on the women. Slyly, the driver reached for his gun. But just as the tips of his fingers touched the butt, Pat Quinn caught sight of him and fired from the hip. The driver fell off the high seat into the dirt, dead.

Mustang snarled at Quinn. "Why in hell'd you do that?"

Jeb Tracy moved in between them. "There ain't no

harm done. We just bury him nice and polite like and take the stage off with us. Then, not a livin' soul will know what happened to these pretty little girls."

"You'd better get us to Corpus Christi," one of the girls said fretfully.

"We won't say a thing about what happened," another one promised.

"We might as well take them with us," Pat Quinn said, ignoring the girls' protests. "When we get tired of them, we can send them packin'."

Mustang looked the girls over again. "All right. You girls get back in that stage."

"Now, look here—" one of them started.

"—with no conversation," he added.

THE gang took the stage some 20 miles into the hills and circled up into the pines and through a black gorge. All the while, the women kept shouting that they would see them hang for this. And when Andy Walker grinned in the window, Beth Johnson took a long hat pin from her black-feathered hat, leaned out and jabbed it into Walker's leg. Pat Quinn roared appreciatively. "Them gals got all the spirit of wild horses."

When they reached the outlaws' camp, the women refused to get out of the coach. Mustang Gray stood there, holding the door open, but they just sat there prim and proper.

"Now, damn it, you step down here or we'll just plain drag you out!" Mustang bellowed angrily.

Hilda Boulone glared at him and let fly with a torrent of French words.

"Whoopiee!" Bob Frey hollered. "We got a Frenchie in the bargain."

"I have just called you all pigs," Hilda said.

"Well, I don't think I'd mind being a pig—so long as it's a French pig," Jeb Tracy said, grinning.

"Now, are you getting out or do we drag you?" Mustang yelled again.

"You just try," Peggy Fern said, brandishing her hat pin. The other girls followed suit.

When the men saw the six girls sitting there, each holding a long hat pin ready for battle, they broke out laughing. "Maybe we just ought to shoot them all in the leg," Pat Quinn suggested. "Then we could drag 'em out easy enough."

"Now that there's not a bad idea, Pat," Andy Walker said, twirling the cylinder on his sixgun. "Down around the ankle."

The girls looked at one another uncertainly. Finally, Beth Johnson jumped out and started toward Walker, her hat pin poised like a sword. But Walker ducked aside at the last second and she went sprawling at his feet. "I'll kill you," she muttered.

Walker grinned down at her. "You sure are makin' one helluva fuss when you know you are a lovin' woman."

Mustang went to the stage and reached in, grabbing at the arm of Min Walker. She tried to pull back and jab him with the pin, but he twisted her around and pulled her out onto the dusty ground.

Then he went back to the stage and reached in for Anne Riley, who managed to jab him in the arm. He slapped her hard across the face and said, "You want to act like wild horses, then we'll treat you like wild horses. You want to start actin' like women, then you'll get treated like women. You girls hear that?" he called into the others.

Hilda Boulone let go with another torrent of French and Bob Frey hooked his thumbs in his trousers. "You know," he said, "I'll bet she's saying how much she loves me. Ain't that right now, Miss?"

Hilda stepped down out of the stage proudly, defiance burning in her green eyes, her full lips pressed tightly shut.

"I reckon one little French girl knows more about lovin' than all the gals in the whole state of Texas," Jeb Tracy said.

"You're damned right," Bob Frey agreed, watching Hilda.

"In Paris, we also learn how to kill a man," Hilda said, looking straight at Frey.

The men laughed and Ernie Holloway said, "Hell, if you got to go sometime, that's as good a way as any."

Mustang Gray pushed Hilda back to where the other two women were standing and said, "Enough speeches. Now, the rest of you girls get out here."

One by one the girls stepped down and lined up.

"Well, here we are," Gray said, nodding at them. He wrote numbers, from one to six, on some slips of paper, dropped them into his hat, and passed it around among the men. Each man picked a number and in 30 seconds they were all paired off.

"I must say I like your romantic approach," Beth Johnson told Mustang, hot anger in her voice.

He grinned at her, nodding. "I got your number, honey. So we'll have plenty of time to discuss my romantic approach. Come on . . ."

At his approach, she started to run off, but Mustang got a bear hug on her. "Little wildcat," he grunted.

"Wild enough to scratch your damn eyes out," Beth cried, stabbing at his eyes with long fingernails.

He slapped her hands away. "Now, stop all this damn fussin'" Mustang slapped her so hard that she realized there was no sense in struggling.

When she quit fighting, the other men went for their women. Pat Quinn grabbed Anne Riley, and she cursed him fervently as he swept her up in his arms and carried her off into a cave in the side of the hill.

Hilda offered no resistance as Frey took hold of her

arm and led her off. But as they entered the cave, she said calmly, "In the middle of the night—when you are very happy and sleeping like a little baby—I will kill you."

Frey grinned and said, "Maybe a little of the right kind of lovin' will put you to sleep, too."

The other girls didn't struggle or argue much longer. There were some tears, some curses, some black promises. But in a matter of minutes, the men were either carrying or leading the women to various parts of the big cave they used as a hideout.

That first night was a loud one in the camp of Mustang Gray, with all kinds of hollering and crying and name calling. Finally it became quiet except for the occasional sound of whispering. Along about three o'clock in the morning, Bob Frey snapped awake in his bunk, a look of terror in his bloodshot eyes. At first he thought that Hilda had been trying to strangle him, but she had only rolled over in her sleep and put her arms around him. He heaved a sigh of relief and went back to sleep.

The next day began long past noon. In Mustang Gray's little cubbyhole, Beth Johnson said, "We don't have to go outside today, do we?"

Gray smiled. "You sure are changing your tune."

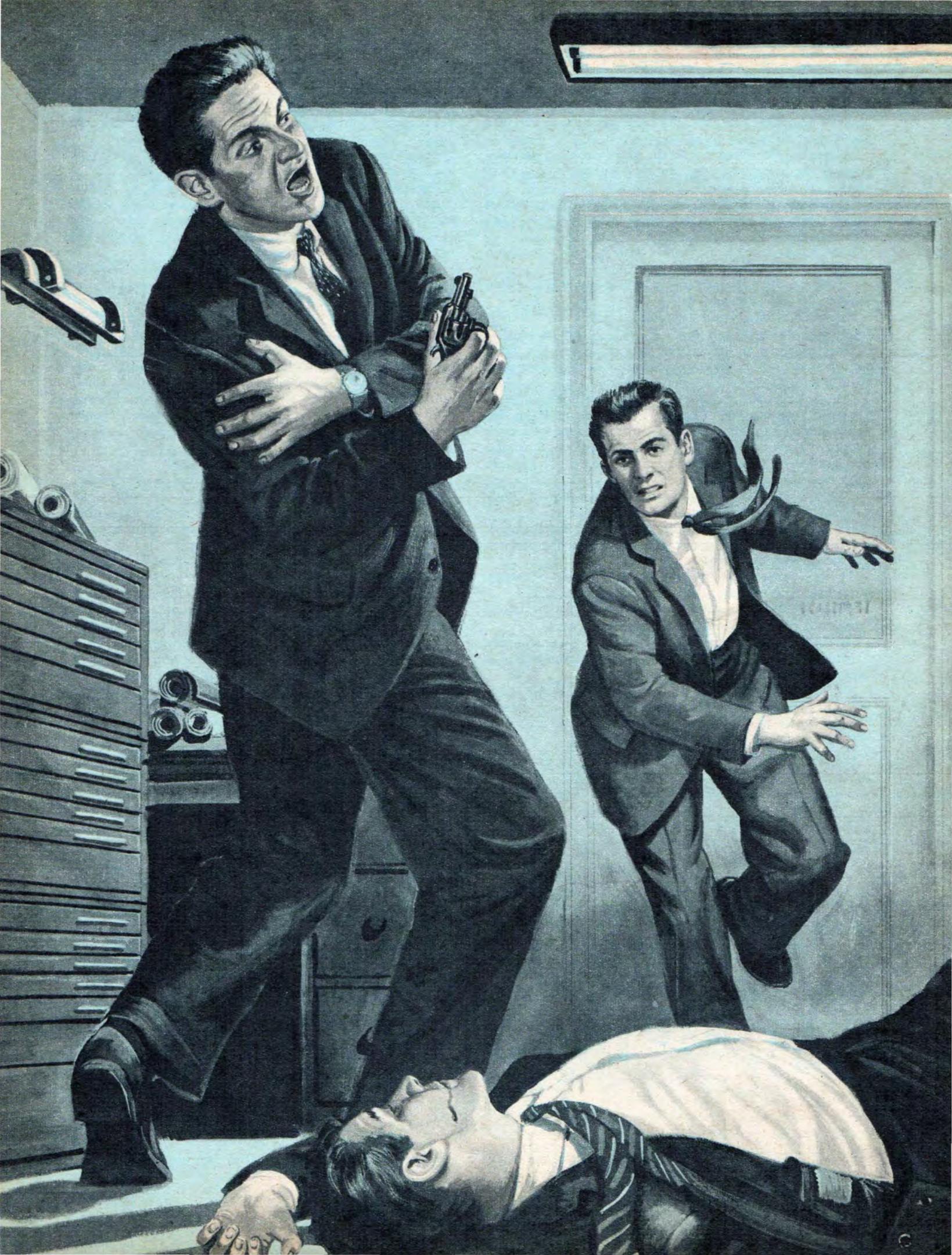
The girl kissed him and slowly ran her fingers across his lips. "I like different kinds of music," she said. Gray laughed. "I hate a man like you," she told him, holding his face close to hers. "You make me forget I'm a businesswoman."

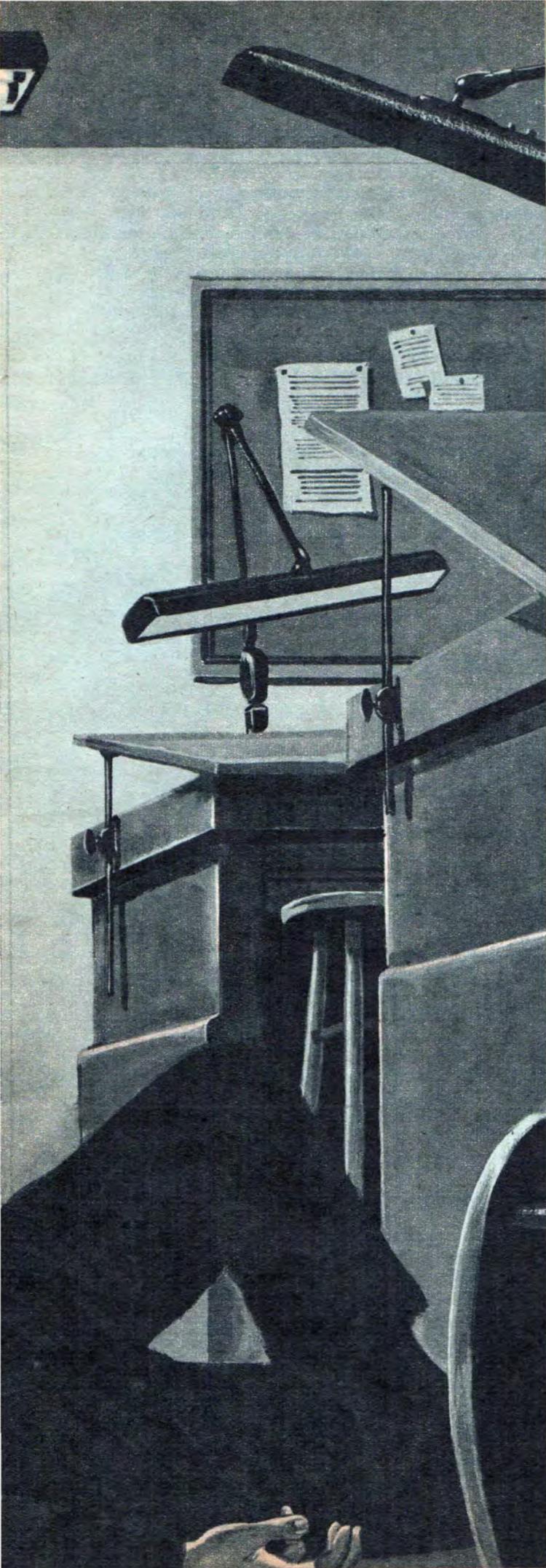
Farther back in the cave, Jeannie Clemens said to Jeb Tracy, "But you mustn't tell the other girls I'm happy. In New York—in the house where I worked—I fell in love with a young musician. He was not a very good musician, but he was a very good man." She laughed softly, looking into Tracy's face for a moment. "But when the madame learned I was seeing him on my day off, she beat me until I could hardly move. It was bad business, she said . . ." Jeb's kiss silenced whatever else Jeannie Clemens might have had to say.

Two days later, when the gang went out to meet another stage that was due from Corpus Christi, Bob Frey was left behind to keep an eye (Continued on page 84)



"Whoopee!" Bob Frey shouted when the beautiful girls stepped down. "This is better than gold!"





Leak In Project Emily

Meyers was out to corner the secret agent who was stealing the missile plans—even if it meant turning in the girl he loved

By PHIL HINER

I WENT for Joan Bridewell for obvious reasons; she had a full figure with firm, clean lines, and she had startling blue eyes in a heart-shaped face. The first time I met her was at the plant with Ronnie Bivens. I couldn't understand how a girl like that could be interested in a guy like Ronnie. Not that I didn't like him; it's just that he was brooding and introverted. He wasn't much fun to be with, and he was plain nasty to anybody who got in his way.

It made it easier for me to start dating Joan without having any qualms of conscience. Now she was seeing both of us fairly regularly, although it was still a guess who had the edge.

Up until a week ago, I would have figured the possibility of being alone with Joan in her apartment was about as remote as being aboard a moon-bound rocket. Yet here I was, pouring the Martinis while she lovingly turned the steaks on the fireplace grill.

"I'm glad you didn't get air-sick," she said. "At the airport they said there were storms from coast to coast."

"Which reminds me," I said, holding the pitcher suspended over a cocktail glass. "How did you know I'd be on that flight?" Her face lost some of its shine, and I added hastily, "I sure was glad to see you when I came down that ramp."

"You phoned from the Washington airport, remember? I got the word from Agnes."

I had been talking to Ronnie just before boarding, and Agnes Johnson was his secretary. The secretaries at Van Horne Engineering can tell you more about company business in ten minutes than you can learn in an hour of scanning progress reports.

Joan brushed her face against mine as she took the Martini. "I missed you Hal. It's been two long days."

I felt a twinge in my gut. I'd missed her, too, but I was worried about getting too involved with her. Joan might

be mixed up in the trouble at the plant. Sturgis Case had said as much when he called Ronnie, Dillon, our security officer, Gibson, the chief engineer, and myself into conference in Gibson's office.

Gibson had closed his office door before introducing Sturgis Case, of the FBI. There were no preliminaries. "Your company's in trouble, gentlemen," Case said.

Case removed a six-inch strip of eight mm. film from an envelope. "You, Mister Meyers. Take a look at this and tell us what you see." He shoved the film and an eyeglass across at me.

AS the lines and symbols of an electrical schematic came into focus, I felt drops of sweat on my forehead. I looked up puzzled. "Mister Case, I only put this drawing on vellum last week. It's hard to believe."

"Emily?" Gibson asked.

I nodded. Six months before I had been made project engineer on a prototype missile guidance system. "Project Emily" was its code name at the Bureau. Originally, the system had been classified CONFIDENTIAL, and the end-product missile SECRET. Recently, however, I had made a significant simplification in the computer and the whole thing had been classified SECRET.

"Where did you get the film, Mister Case?" I asked.

"Outside the plant. You've got a leak on Project Emily, Mister Meyers. Until we plug that leak, you don't dare come up with a single idea worth five cents to a foreign power."

I glanced at Ronnie and he stared back, shaking his head. Gibson sat there with a worried frown. "We had a tight schedule on Emily before Sputnik," he said. "You can imagine the pressure now."

Case's eyes narrowed. "No word of a leak is to go beyond this office. That includes your cognizant Bureau, officials here at Van Horne, and particularly your wives and friends. I'm telling you four men for definite reasons: Dillon, because he is plant security officer; Gibson, because he heads up engineering, and I want some company brass aware of the situation; Bivens, because as chief draftsman he is responsible for the vault where the original vellums are kept; and Meyers, because as project engineer he must see that no more classified data gets on paper.

"There is another, somewhat personal reason why Bivens and Meyers are here." Sturgis Case glanced at his notes, then from Ronnie to me. "Four girls have access to the vault. I want two of them watched—Agnes Johnson, Bivens' secretary, and Joan Bridewell. Miss Bridewell is known around the plant as your girl friend, Mister Bivens, but for the past week or so has been seen frequently in Mister Meyers' company. Am I correct?"

"Yes sir," Ronnie and I said together, without looking at each other. I felt embarrassed because I had made no conscious effort to steal Joan from Ronnie. It had just happened. She gave me a lift one evening and I had invited her to have a drink afterward. There had been a chat in my office the next day and she'd had a couple of tickets to the theater. I don't think either one of us realized what was happening.

Case cleared his throat. "Mister Bivens, I want you to keep close watch on Agnes Johnson. Mister Meyers, you keep an eye on Joan Bridewell."

So here I was, keeping an eye on Joan and hating every minute of it. I couldn't get used to playing counterspy, especially with a beautiful suspect. I was a guy who had

been so busy becoming an engineer that I still retained my adolescent illusions about females. It didn't seem possible that such a pretty, healthy girl could be involved in anything so terrible.

Another possibility, which seemed equally absurd, had crossed my mind on the plane back to the Coast. Perhaps Ronnie and Joan were in on this together, and Joan was deliberately cultivating me only because of Project Emily. Ronnie had helped me get my job at Van Horne and more or less had sponsored my progress, yet I realized that I knew very little about him and understood him even less.

We had the steak and another Martini. Then I got up to leave. Sturgis Case knew I was due back tonight and he might want to get in touch with me.

Joan reluctantly walked me to the door. The Martinis had done nice things to her inhibitions, and she slipped my arm around her waist. "I think it's very mean of you to eat and run," she pouted.

"It's this damned project. I've got half a night's work to do on my trip report."

She stopped me in the doorway. "Trade a goodnight kiss for the dinner?"

It was the first time I had kissed her, although we had seen a lot of each other during the past week. When I came up for air, she whispered, "And another for the Martinis . . ."

Joan grinned when I finally released her. "Sure you won't change your mind about that trip report?"

"No. See you tomorrow."

"Tomorrow night," she said and reached up to kiss me again.

It wasn't part of the business at hand but I had to know. "Am I cutting in on Ronnie, Joan?"

"No, Hal, you're not. I like him but he's not for me."

CASE wasn't waiting in my apartment as I had anticipated. But another man was; a lean six-footer, middle-aged and dark, with those white streaks at the temples that the girls go for. He was sprawled in my leather contour chair but quickly sat up and offered his FBI identification. "You're late getting in," he said. His name was Mitchell.

"I stopped at Joan Bridewell's for dinner. She picked me up at the airport."

"What do you think of Joan Bridewell?"

"She's a damn pretty girl."

"Anything suspicious?"

"Only that she's making a play for me."

"You don't think she likes you?"

"I'd prefer to think she likes me. I don't really know."

"I have a job for you, Mister Meyers. You have access to the vault so it shouldn't pose any problem, and Case would prefer not to invite questions by having our men appear at the plant." He pulled a small cardboard box from his briefcase. "There's a time-lapse camera in this box. It takes a picture every three seconds and it can go all night. Now, in the center of the vault there's a table with a light suspended above it—a perfect place to spread out blueprints and photograph them. You're to place this camera so that it covers the table."

"I'll take care of it tonight," I said. I'd done a lot of night work on Emily and the vault combination had been made available to me.

"Good. Now, one other thing—and this you won't like. In the last couple of days, suspicion has narrowed down to Ronnie Bivens and Joan Bridewell. Tomorrow, I

want you to talk to Ronnie. Act excited—someone in the Bureau made you aware of the real importance of Emily. It's to be used in a mass production ICBM, and the defense department may pour as much as three billion dollars into it. Tell him to keep the story confidential."

"I don't like this, Mister Mitchell. Ronnie got me started at Van Horne."

"Do you like treason? Remember this, Meyers. If Bivens is lily-white, then no harm has been done. I want that bait thrown out!"

He was right of course. "Do you think there's a chance that Joan isn't involved in this, Mister Mitchell? She just doesn't seem to be the type."

He smiled slowly. "Girls come in two types, young fellow—the pretty ones and the other kind."

The next day Ronnie dropped into my office early. After a few minutes of shooting the breeze about my Washington trip, I gave him the bait.

"Believe it or not, Ronnie, this guidance system came through evaluation tests like it was dipped in Chanel Number 5. It plots trajectories with fantastic accuracy. The decision's in to use it in a production ICBM . . ."

"Is this straight dope?" he asked. His voice sounded as if he was tremendously excited but was trying to hide it.

"Sorry to interrupt . . ." A girl hesitated just inside the open door. It was Agnes Johnson, Ronnie's secretary. She was a very tall blonde girl with a showgirl's figure. Her face was pretty, too, except that it seemed to mask her inner discontent. "You have a Washington call, Ronnie, in your office."

"Who is it?"

"The Bureau."

Ronnie got up, then stopped as Joan Bridewell appeared behind Agnes in the doorway.

"One side, Dollie," Joan said in a sprightly voice. "This is a small doorway, you know." Surface-wise, the remark was a kidding one but you could sense instantly that it didn't go over with Agnes. She drew coldly aside.

"Joan," Ronnie said, "I'd like to see you in my office just before coffee break. Okay?"

Joan hesitated. "Let's make it after the break. It's my turn to pick up coffee for the girls."

The muscles in Ronnie's face tightened. He didn't like to be turned down on anything.

"Would you like the call transferred?" Agnes asked. She was annoyed at the diversion Joan had caused. I knew what was bothering the girl. It was all over Engineering that she had a mad infatuation for Ronnie and that he had been on the verge of giving her a whirl when Joan came along. Now a blowtorch couldn't melt the ice between the girls.

"I'll take it in my office," Ronnie said. "Would you please tell the Bureau to hold on?" He stuck around another couple of minutes then left with a quick "see you after the break" to Joan.

"Hello," Joan said, giving the word an intimate touch now that we were alone. "Hope you didn't get a single word written on your trip report."

"If it makes you happy, I didn't."

She smiled and sank into the guest chair beside the desk, crossing her long slender legs. She was particularly enticing when she smiled. Her blue eyes crinkled at the corners and she said, "I don't mind Agnes not liking me, but you'd think she would make it less obvious."

"I think you enjoy giving her the needle."



Joan Bridewell was crouching over a table stacked with the top-secret blueprints, shooting them with a midget camera.

"No, but I'm learning fast. Agnes would like to stick a knife between my ribs, and it's so ridiculous." She lit a cigarette. "I dropped in to tell you, Hal, that Mother came over from Long Beach today. I'll have to drive her back this evening."

I was suddenly very disappointed. And that wasn't very smart, after the warning I'd had from Case and Mitchell. "Then I guess our safari is off for tonight?"

"Oh, no. I'll leave Long Beach early and stop by your place. It's practically on the way home, you know."

"You sure you want to see me tonight, Joan? Be honest."

She looked genuinely angry as she got up and headed for the door. "Engineers don't catch on very fast; they're always on Cloud Seven. But you—you're the prize!"

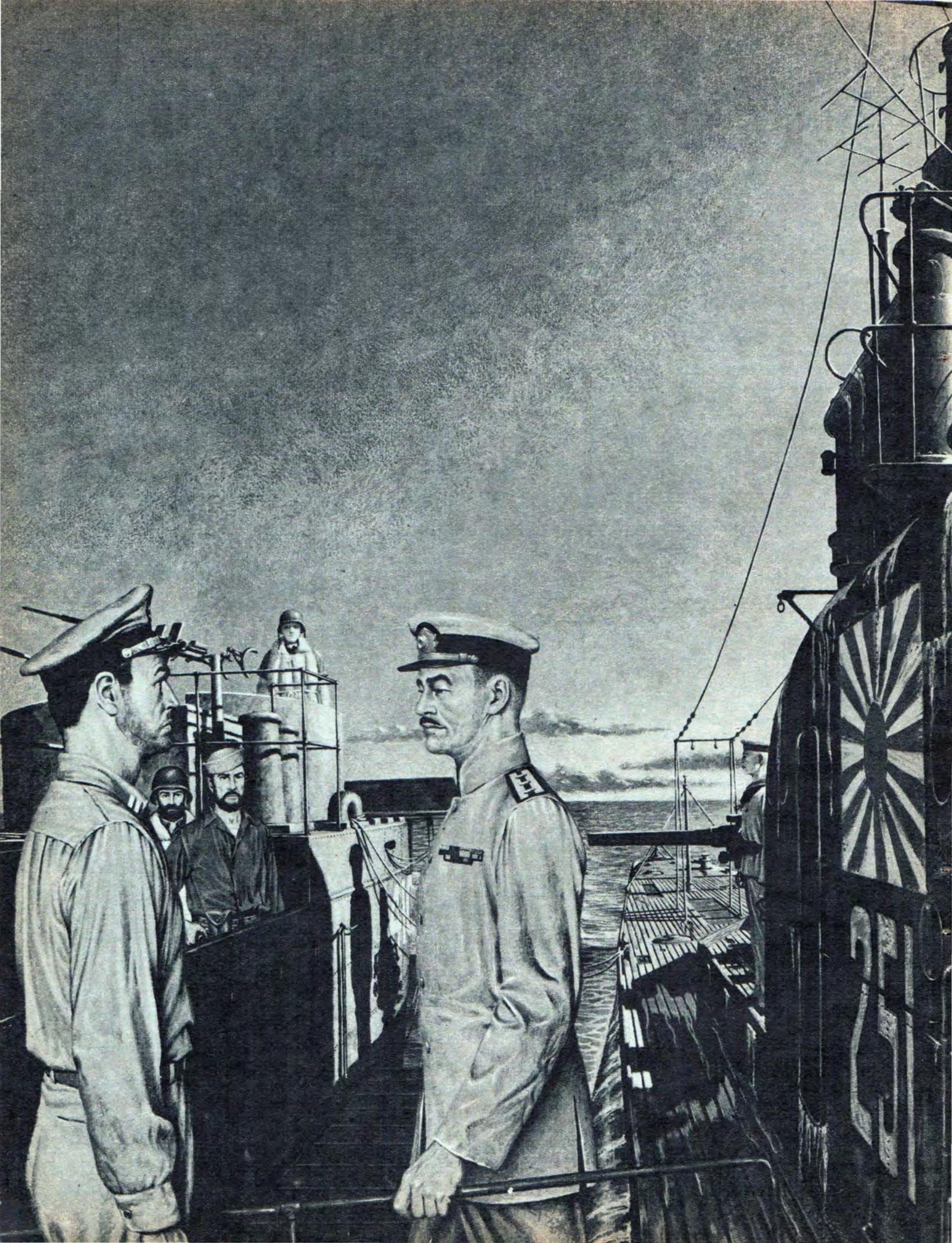
The plant closed at 4:30 P.M. but I waited until 6:30 before I felt it was safe to work the vault combination. Once inside the vault, I removed the exposed film and reloaded the camera. Then I rechecked the positioning of the camera.

The whole operation took 15 minutes. I had a bad moment when I let myself out the vault door—I almost fell over Ronnie. My first thought was: Could he be hanging around the vault waiting for an opportunity to microfilm some drawings?

He beat me to the obvious question. "What are you doing in here so late, Hal?"

"Doing the work I don't get time for during the day—checking tracings. Why are you here?"

"I'm leaving right away. (Continued on page 92)



STRANGE RENDEZVOUS

We were on a milk run out of Panama when the sub surfaced. Everyone figured it would blow our three LCIs to hell, but the Jap commander came aboard with a weird proposition

BY EDWARD STANTON AS TOLD TO CHARLES GOODMAN

UNDER blackout, our LCI plowed through the empty wastes of the southern Pacific Ocean. Two other LCIs had joined us at the Panama Canal and were trailing in loose formation. We were south of the regular sea lanes where the big battles of the Pacific were taking place, so we felt safe. No self-respecting Jap warship would wander this far from the war zone. It was June, 1943.

Just before dawn, I opened my bloodshot eyes and slowly focused on my luminous wrist watch. I lifted my head from the map table and looked around the tower.

"What's up?" I asked, rubbing my eyes.

The young exec officer snorted derisively. "Nothing's up. We passed a couple of our own ships at four bells." He grinned. "You been dreaming, Skipper?"

"Only of girls." Still, I felt a tugging premonition. I got up and stood by the rail, squinting hard into the darkness.

Vibrating under my feet was a large, newly commissioned LCI, adapted to transport freight. We were a green crew, just out of the fields, factories and schools. Our debut in the war was a routine job, carrying electrical wiring and cases of medicine to Bora Bora.

A dozing gull peered curiously at us as we shoved past, then tucked a clumsy beak under his wing for a short snooze. The war seemed remote in this peaceful, never-never land.

A pinpoint of light winked on the shadowy horizon. It faded and I strained my eyes, watching. But nothing more happened. I was tired. Perhaps it had been a

jumping porpoise which had reflected the coming dawn. Perhaps there had been nothing at all—only a trick played by nerves and fatigue.

Then the pinpoint of light blinked again. It was clearer now. The helmsman gripped the wheel as the signalman moved to the rail beside me. The light blinked again. On and off.

The signalman looked at me curiously. "It says, 'Stand by!'"

A small shock of warning went through me. I trained my binoculars on the light and said, "Ask him for further orders."

He blinkered the message, his glaring signal lamp reflecting on the faces of the deck crew looking up at me. We waited silently, until the light blinked on the horizon.

"He just repeated the 'Stand by,'" the signalman muttered.

"Maybe it's somebody on a life raft," the helmsman said hopefully.

Then we saw the slim gray periscope of the sub lacing through the water. I frowned, wondering why a submarine would be this far south of the important sea lanes.

"Ours?" the signalman asked.

As I watched through the binoculars, the ocean began to churn, and rising like a giant sea monster, the submarine surfaced through the milky foam. I felt a tremendous chill. Its periscope light was blinking again.

I snapped on the power to the electric megaphone

and called to the two trailing LCIs: "We got company."

The shadowy outlines of their crews were visible at the forward rails, facing the unidentified sub.

"Stand by!" I called. "Stop all engines!"

Bells clanged across the water and we began drifting silently.

The periscope began blinking again.

"Senior officer's ship, stand out," the signalman translated.

I spun the wheel and we drifted slowly away from the other LCIs.

"Now what?" the executive officer asked.

The big sub began to take clear shape. It was cruising easily toward us at three-quarter speed through the growing light of dawn.

"Should I make a log entry?" the signalman asked.

"No," I said. "Not until we know who he is."

I crossed to the table and marked our position on the chart line. When I returned to the rail, I knew for certain. This was the enemy.

The gunnery officer dashed up the ladder into the tower. "Who is it?" he asked.

"A Jap sub!" I told him calmly.

His mouth gaped. "My gun crew!" he shouted, reaching for the tower phone.

I stopped him. "We can't do anything against a sub with twenty millimeters! Your pea-shooters would just make him mad."

"So what do we do?" he snapped, angry from fear.

The signalman was poised to tap out a distress signal. But something told me not to send it.

The signalman turned to me. "He's coming alongside. He says, 'Head north and turn your guns to starboard.'"

"What'll we do, Skipper?" my exec asked.

"Inflate life rafts?" I asked, kidding, trying to ease the strain.

I called the engineroom. At quarter speed we headed north, then cut the engines. The deck 20 mms were turned starboard.

The Jap sub was rapidly approaching now. It was a massive monster, sleek and fast and more than three times the length of our 158-foot bucket. Its deck cannon could knock our guns out without even heating up its barrel. I could order full steam ahead—Spread out—Every ship for itself. But I knew it would be a short run, like three mackerel trying to outswim a hungry shark.

I leaned out and called down to the crew. "This may be it. But don't get panicky. Just keep loose and easy."

The sub cut slowly between the other two LCIs, now several hundred yards astern, then turned and moved straight for us. It was beautiful, deadly and huge. Its electric megaphone crackled across the water. "Train your guns to port. Come alongside. Throw your lines over."

Almost hypnotized by the strange thing that was happening, I gave the orders. I thought I had detected a Boston accent in the voice, but that was ridiculous.

Slowly we edged toward the sub, bumped against it and threw our lines over its deck. Crewmen dashed out of the sub's hatches, secured the lines, then hustled below again. The shadow of its cannon lay across us like a black finger.

A lone Jap officer stood in the conning tower. Bright morning sunlight cast heavy shadows across his powerfully formed face as he glanced down at our deck.

"Do not be alarmed," he called through a hand megaphone.

My helmsman stifled a nervous laugh. "A real joker," he mumbled.

The Jap officer spoke again. "I want some cigarettes."

Water lapped noisily in the stunned silence.

"Cigarettes?" I repeated.

"Camels, if you have them," he continued. "My crew prefers them. I don't know why."

Clumsily, fingers gone numb, I picked up my megaphone and said, "Is that why you stopped us?"

"I will need a full case," he called. "Please, make them ready for me immediately."

I felt slightly dizzy, incapable of a sensible reply.

"May I come aboard?" the Jap asked politely.

I stammered, "Permission granted." Then, glancing at the wide-eyed signalman, I whispered, "Always pays to be nice to people."

"Sir?" he said, as if snapping out of a dream.

Without hesitation, the Jap officer strode across an aluminum gang plank onto our LCI. Three rising suns on his collar identified him as a full commander. I stumbled down the tower ladder and walked up to him. He extended his hand and smiled.

When we had shaken hands, he glanced about the deck and observed, "You're standing too high out of the water to be carrying troops or arms." He turned with obvious weariness and said, "Shall we go below?"

I led him down the passageway and stepped aside for him to enter the ward room. Once we were inside, he said, "I've ordered my crew to put away all their small arms. Have you done the same?"

I wagged my head. "No."

"Will you do so now, please?". It was an order.

He sat down at the table and loosened his collar. He was alone and unarmed. Standing right behind him was my muscular ward boy, Jackson. Jackson's eyes searched mine, waiting for a signal. "Tell the crew to stow their small arms," I told him.

Jackson nodded and went out, leaving the door slightly open behind the commander.

The small ward room had always seemed cramped. Now, with the commander in it, it seemed unbearable. He was very tall and well built, and he seemed to fill the room.

"Does it seem strange to you," he asked, glancing up with a smile, "that I should stop an enemy craft for cigarettes?"

I felt my hands getting moist. Again I heard the trace of a Boston accent in his voice. What was he doing—playing with us before he destroyed us?

"It does seem a bit strange," I said.

He chuckled in a warm voice, showing a beautiful set of teeth. "It is," he said, motioning me to a chair. As I sat down, he asked, "Do you live in Boston?"

"Yes," I said. "How did you know?"

Just then, Jackson stepped soundlessly into the room and waited behind the commander, his eyes on me. I reached out a hand and he came around the table with the keys to the small arms case. "Thanks," I said.

The boatswain poked his head just inside the door. "Skipper, the small arms are secured. Uh . . . we're drifting close to the other LCIs."

The sub commander nodded and said to me, "Would you check our position and the situation with the bumpers, please?"

The commander was outnumbered, three to one. The boatswain was blocking the only exit from the room and I knew he and Jackson were waiting for a signal from me.

"Also," the commander added, smiling at a new idea, "would you tell your crew they may take the cigarettes across and visit aboard my submarine?"

I chuckled in nervous uncertainty. "How would your crew take to an American boarding party?"

"They will be most welcome," he said. "I assure you."

Faces poked anxiously through the hatch doors as I left the ward room and walked toward the deck. Questions came at me from all sides. "What's he gonna do, Skip? Have we had it?"

I raised my hands. "Hold it. He only wants a case of cigarettes."

Nervous curses broke out. "He what?"

I shrugged. "Here's the deal. The commander says it's okay for a detail to take the case of butts over—meet his crew and look his sub over."

"Me get on a Jap sub?" the signalman exploded. "They'd haul me off to Tokyo if they didn't feed me to the sharks first."

"You know they can do that, anyway," I said. "They're top dog right now."

"You want us to go over, Skip?"

I spread my hands. "Suit yourself. I'm just second in command."

The boys looked across at the empty sub deck in silence. There was the air of unreality about everything.

"Move out crosswind from the other LCIs," I called up to my exec.

The commander was looking out the porthole when I got back. "Excellent, Lieutenant," he said.

"Would you care for a drink?" I asked. Somehow, I had to get on some kind of personal terms with him, so he wouldn't scuttle us when he left.

He sat down, stretched his legs under the table and smiled. "I didn't know you were permitted to carry alcohol aboard."

"Actually," I said, "it is against regulations. But I just happened to have an extra bottle when we left the Canal." I sent Jackson for the fifth of Scotch in my foot locker.

When we had our drinks, the commander lifted his glass and smiled. "Your health." He sipped the Scotch appreciatively. "This is pleasant. Even the sea appears friendly, for a change."

"And the temperature," I replied. "It's like a cool spring morning back home."

"It is," he agreed. "Back home."

We both sensed the unintentional humor at the same time and laughed together.

"Home," I repeated. "It means the same, no matter where it is."

"Have you always been on an LCI?" he asked, accepting a cigarette and a light.

"No. In the beginning I was with Intelligence in Hawaii," I said. "My office window overlooked the harbor at Pearl. I had a view of the junkheap you made of our fleet."

He didn't bat an eye. "That was an unforgettable experience," he said, remembering it without excitement. "Feeling the water shock on my hull when the torpedoes ripped into the towering steel hulls. Watching through the periscope as they broke open in flames and sank

hissing beneath the water." He stared upward a moment.

There was no triumph on his face as he looked across the table at me. "We were one of the subs that struck Pearl Harbor. Our target was the battleship *Arizona*." He raised his glass slightly and said, "A beautiful ship."

I glanced at Jackson, who was as shaken as I was. This was "the enemy," and there we were, chatting casually in my ward room, sipping Scotch.

"Where did you go to school?" the commander asked.

"Pennsylvania," I said. "With a little Navy training at Princeton."

"Have you ever sailed before?"

"I sailed out to Bora Bora, once, when I was fourteen. On Dad's yawl."

"And now, back to Bora Bora," he said.

A cramp grabbed my insides. How did he know our destination?

"Germantown, Haverford, Bryn Mawr . . ." he was saying. "Yes, I used to have so many friends there. Perhaps not so many now . . .

"Remember the bars at the foot of Chestnut Street?" he asked, smiling. "What marvelously hot arguments we used to have on politics and religion. I'm Episcopalian, you know. But, as a student, I did appreciate the wisdom of Lord Buddha."

My mouth was relaxed in surprise. We had both gone to the same school and even belonged to the same church!

"Did you happen to know Evelyn St. Simon? She attended Bryn Mawr," he said.

I swallowed hard. "She's my cousin."

"I don't believe it!" He smiled, boyishly. "Evelyn and I were very good friends."

My head was ringing.

The commander sobered abruptly. "Has my crew received the case of cigarettes?" he asked Jackson.

Jackson nodded. "Yes, sir."

"Fine," the commander said. He stood up and turned to the porthole, motioning for me to join him. "Watch what is happening."

Some of my men were on the sub's deck, handing out cigarettes to the Jap crew. Wallets came out. Pictures were handed back and forth. Japanese and American heads nodded in respectful appreciation. It looked friendly but stiff and formal. Then one of my crew apparently made a comment about one of the Japanese pictures. Everybody laughed and slapped each other on the back. In another minute, they were all going below. I hoped I'd see them come back.

I faced the commander uncertainly. "Is there anything else?" I asked. "Besides the cigarettes?"

Maybe I could persuade him he needn't blow our three LCIs to kingdom come. We had very little strategic importance, and none of us wanted to join the grinning sharks that had gathered around the idle LCIs.

The commander sipped a fresh glass of Scotch and thoughtfully fingered its cold rim. The ward room was deathly quiet. Outside, somewhere on our LCI, I heard the heavy accent of Japanese voices. The stomach cramp tightened, just under my belt buckle. The stillness seemed endless. I began to pray that someone would fall on deck, vomit, drop a dish—anything to break the silence.

"Our supply ship was to meet us several days ago at a point near Espirito Santo," the commander said finally. "Although it was dangerous, I (Continued on page 72)



1st Prize. Ken Hames writes from Chicago, "Joyce is half pixie, half angel, and I love both of them."

"My Favorite Girl" Photo Contest

WE know you wouldn't take a million dollars for the woman in your life, but we're not greedy. We'll pay you hard cash for a simple snapshot of your favorite girl. All you have to do is mail it to CLIMAX Magazine, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, New York. If your picture wins 1st Prize, CLIMAX will send you a check for \$25. For every other photo we use each month, we will pay \$10. On the back of your entry, please print your name and address, and explain in a single sentence what the lady in question means to you. Do not inclose return postage. None of the photos submitted will be returned. Please do not send us irreplaceable photos.

Bob Bailey's Georgia peach "always looks great, but she is prettiest in her pajamas."





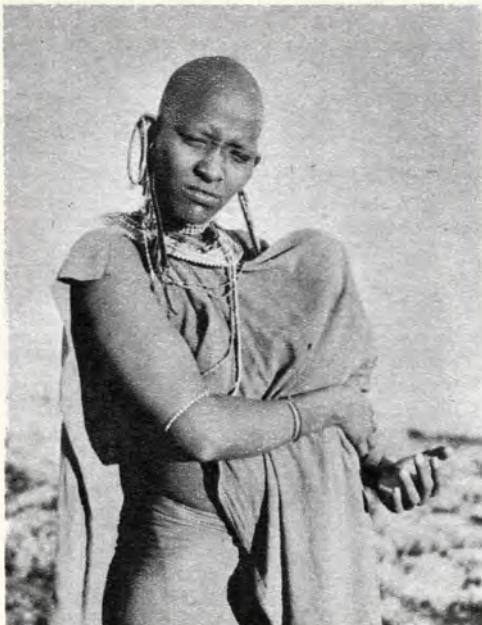
Lock Haven, Penn., student Ross Wilson admits, "Here's the reason for my doing so bad in school. But she's worth it!"

"My wife Margie represents the true beauty of the Far East," says C.A. Schwarz of San Francisco.



From Norfolk, Va., Ed Reel puns, "My Ginger is the spiciest girl I ever met. She puts that extra-special tang in my Navy life."





Safari Girl

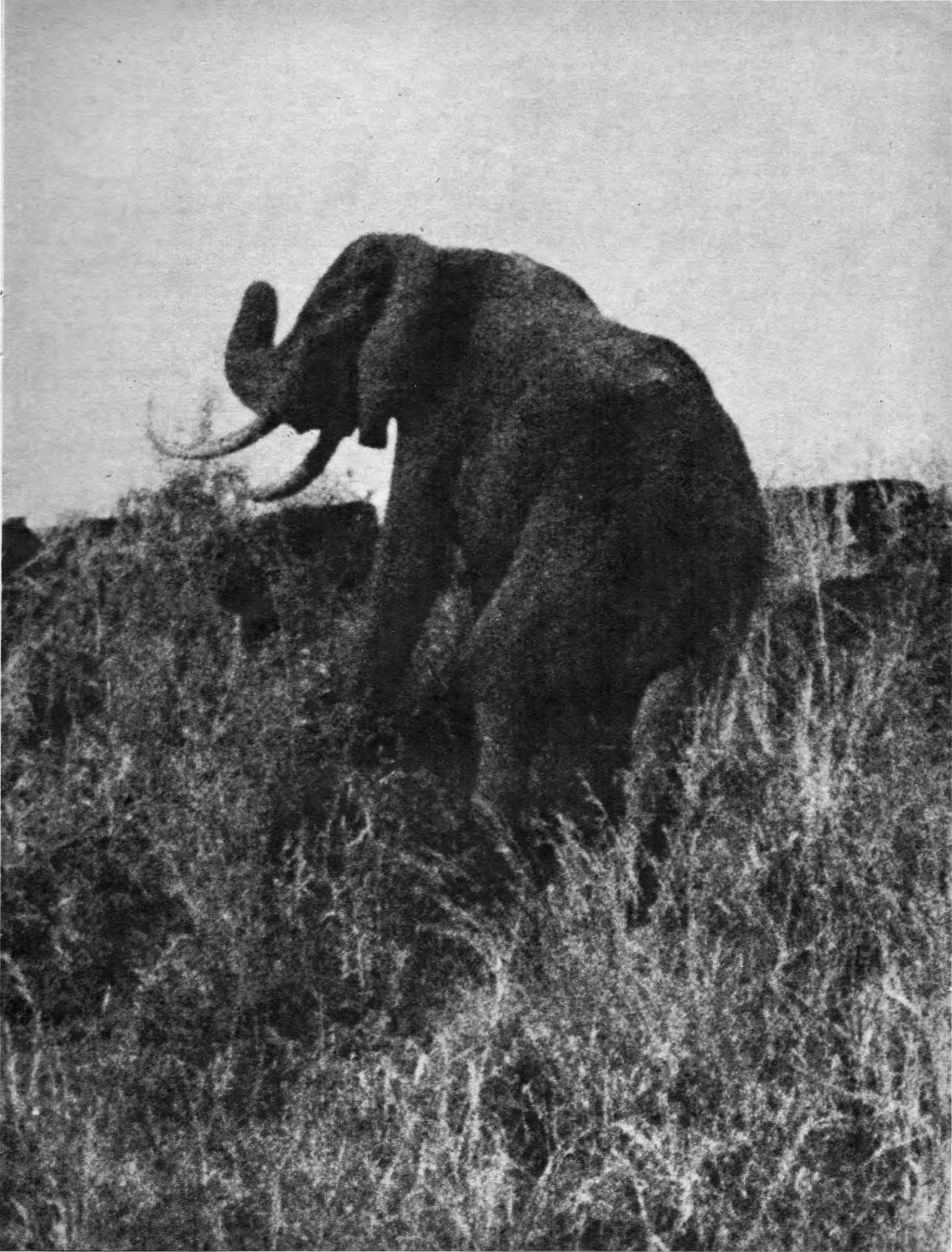
She faced the unknown dangers of the Dark Continent to photograph a savage ritual no woman had ever seen

text and photos by sheila cole

MY BUSINESS is writing travel stories, and I couldn't understand what Pritchard Wood and Partners, the largest public relations and advertising firm in England, could want with me. Then I learned that one of their major accounts is East African Railways and Harbours, and that they wanted me to go to East Africa for them. So, in less time than it takes to learn to speak Swahili, I was equipped with assorted cameras, flashes, special filters and 75 pounds of East African reading matter and PW&P packed me into a classy cabin on British India's cadet training ship *Chantala*, bound for Mombassa.

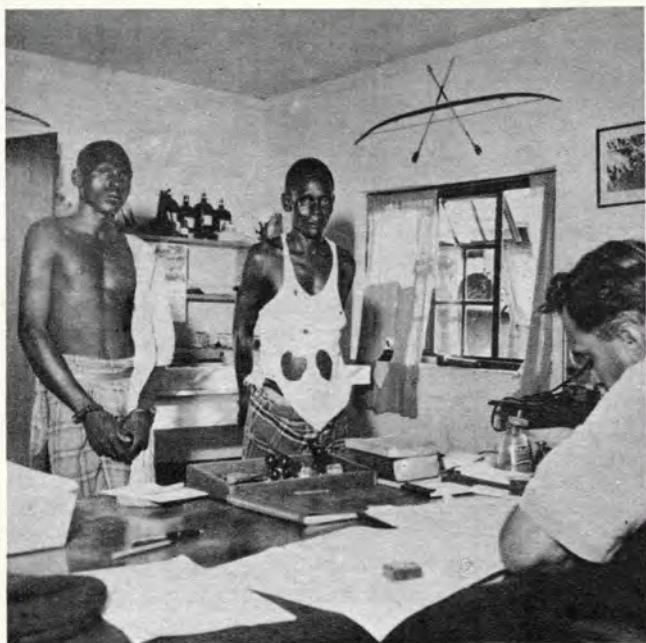
A cadet training ship is an experience, even for a world-hopper like me. It really curbs your smugness about the places you've been, and the things you've seen and done. These cadets, 17 to 22 years old, have been more places, seen more things and done more things than you can shake a swizzle stick at. They are bright, aggressive young men with the quick maturity that usually comes from a steady diet of naval discipline and getting up at five-thirty every morning to swab decks and polish brass.

The *Chantala* docked at the famous old port of Mombassa, home base





A Masai is not a warrior until he drinks the horn of blood.



Kenya rangers have a difficult time controlling the ivory poachers, who slaughter the country's wildlife.

A big newspaper, country club and many theaters make Nairobi an up-to-date city.

for most of the smuggling that goes on from this side of Africa. We got off and the customs officials checked us through, after which I was met by various officials from East African Railways.

Now that I had actually arrived on the "Dark Continent," I expected to change into rush sandals and a *kikoi* and immediately start chopping my way through the bush. Actually, the train that was to take us to Nairobi was the most modern I had seen since I'd left America, several years before.

I was barely settled down for the all-night ride, when an enormous Goan steward arrived to find out when I would like dinner, and what time I would like to have my bed made up. The menu was a really fine one, and after reading it I realized there must be many Indians, Pakistanis, and Goans living in East Africa. All menus in Africa always have at least one curry dish on them, often two or three.

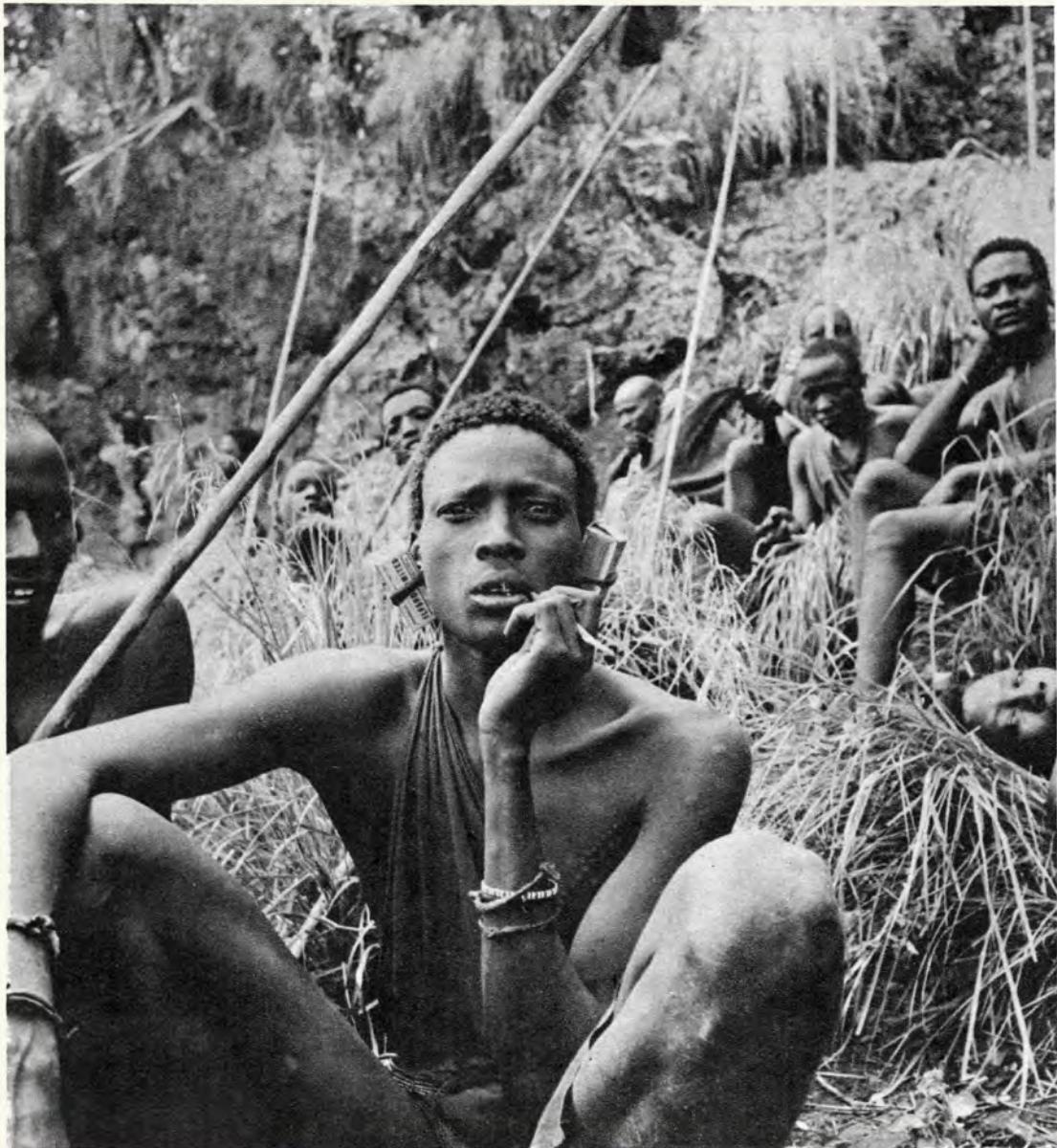
Nairobi, the largest city in Kenya, is not comparable to London, Rome or New York. But it has an active theater group, a country club, the largest newspaper in East Africa and a number of movie theaters. The *ducas*, the little Asian shops, sell everything imaginable and are open all hours of the day and night.

After a few days in Nairobi, I had almost put the "Darkest Africa" idea out of my mind. Outside of a few Hollywood-type white hunters roaming about the streets dressed for safaris, the town was as cosmopolitan as they come. There was some talk about a lion that had wandered out of one of the national parks into somebody's backyard and gobbled up the gardener. But that is far less of a hazard than getting hit by a falling jet, a rather common accident in many countries these days.

The Mau Mau rebellion was another thing that didn't seem as earth-shaking as it did to the outside world either. Quite a number of soldiers and special police were around Nairobi. Countless automobiles with Kenya Special Police license plates lined the streets. I visited a Mau Mau camp and watched the Kikuyu women making pots as part of a rehabilitation program that the British government has set up. In another camp, I saw a hundred male Kikuyu prisoners building European-



Their sacred initiation over, the boys relax before assuming the responsibilities of a Masai warrior.



style shacks for offices, working silently and quickly.

Weeks later, I had reason to go deep into the restricted areas in an open Land Rover, driving between the close-knit little mountains where so many Mau Maus were still hiding out. Each time I saw twigs move above us or on either side, or heard some animal sounds, I remembered how remote this fear had seemed to me back in Nairobi. Now, although Nairobi was a mere 20 miles away, those skin-crawling tales of the Mau Mau became terrifyingly real. I began remembering in explicit detail the atrocity stories I had read in countless newspapers and magazines. I was about as frightened as I have ever been in my life! But frightened as I was, I wanted to learn about all phases of this curious place, and I jumped at every opportunity to go out into the bush. Several days before the new year, I joined a game warden, who was going out to pay some of his rangers working on a road.

Even though it was going to be a one-night trip, we piled the usual things into Land Rover—plenty of tea and sugar, some cooked meat and canned foods. We each

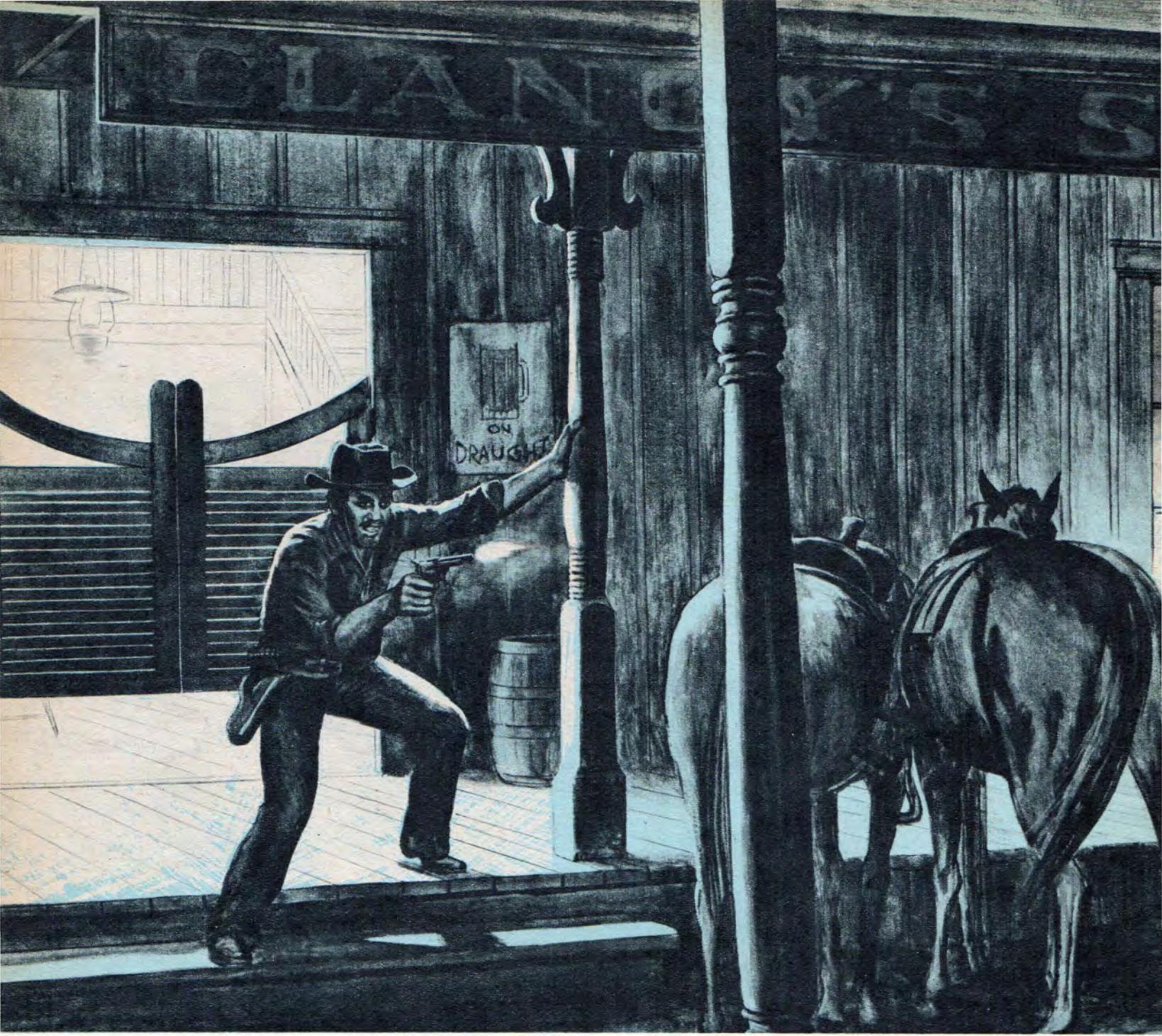
took some make-shift packs to sleep in and a gun and bullet bag. The mosquito netting was almost second nature by this time, and with my camera I was carrying a new portable tape recorder, which ran on batteries.

We left on December 29, after the heat of the day. Later in the evening, we crossed a narrow, shallow point in a river. I lifted my feet off the wet floor onto the dashboard, as we half drove, half floated across.

At times we had to drive off the dust roads and through the thick shrubbery. Knocking over small trees with the front of the Rover, we passed several groups of zebras and elephants feeding. We reached our destination, had a cup of tea, scrubbed the windshield, cleared the brush and thicket out of the Rover and started back.

The next afternoon we reached the river. The water had risen six inches up the bank, and it was doubtful that it would go down before dark.

We camped on a ridge overlooking the water and went to sleep, hoping the river would be down by morning. The following day (Continued on page 80)

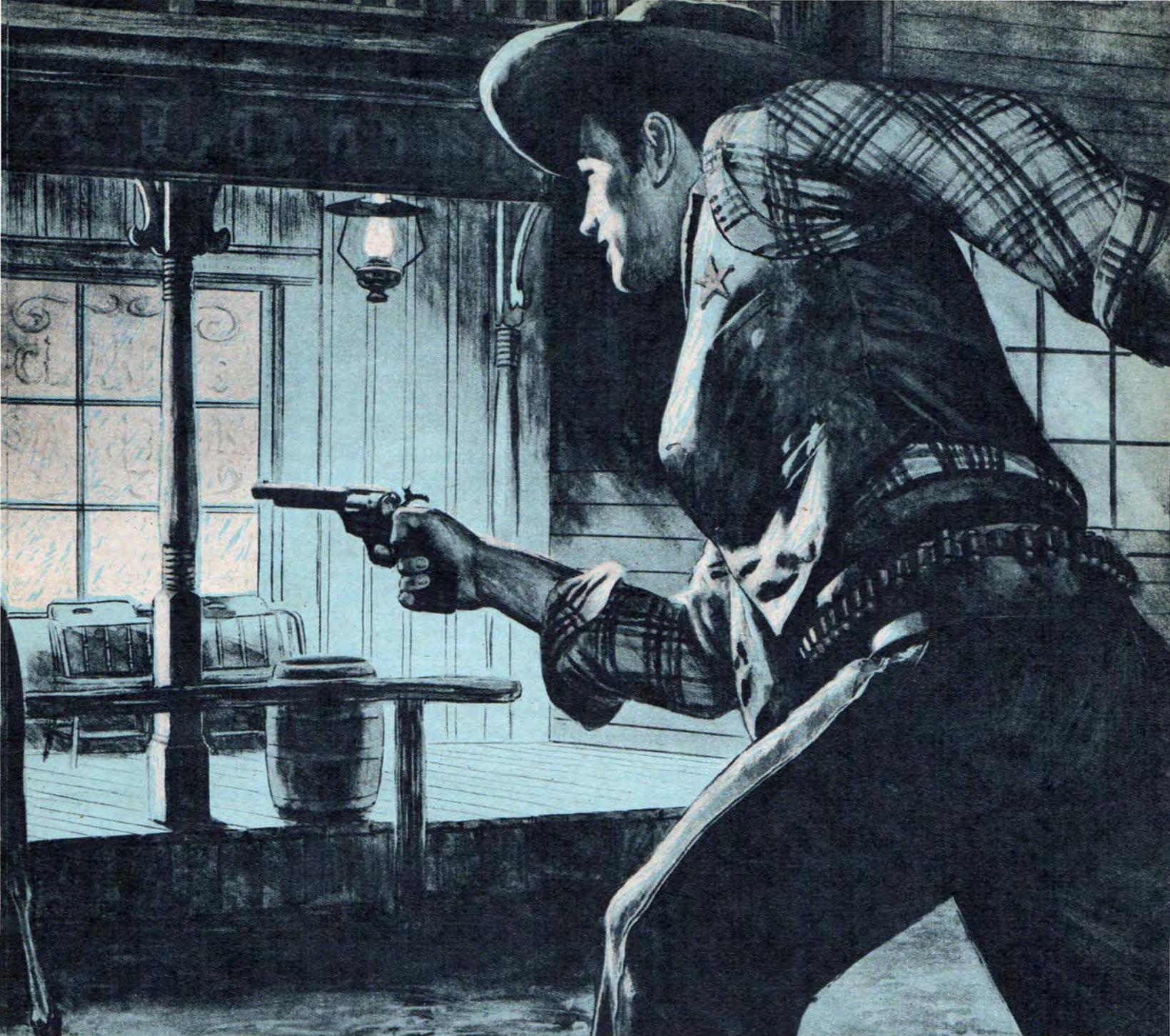


SIX-GUN LEGACY

The marshal had gunned a man down and now he was stuck with an orphaned kid who hated him. It turned out that his life depended on winning the boy over

Prize
Story

By WAYNE SHORT



MATT Cash came out of the doctor's office and limped across the rutted street, feeling the pull of the fresh bandage on his leg wound. He headed for Del's Drygoods Store to try on his wedding suit, smiling to himself and wondering how it would look for the marshal of Buffalo Bend to limp down the aisle at his own wedding.

The way things had been going lately, it was bound to happen.

He had been patrolling along the south end of town

when he'd heard the shots. Matt had drawn his gun and cut through the vacant lot alongside Stark's Mercantile and come out below the bend in Fremont Street. Standing in the middle of the street, a red-haired cowpoke was shooting out the windows of Knock-Kneed Annie's upstairs pleasure parlor.

"Hey, Mister," Matt called easily, "you aimin' to get every one?"

The redhead turned and glared at him with a bleary look. "Nah," he said, "I ain't got enough ammuni-



Afterwards, Matt and the boy made a meal of bacon and eggs.

tion for that." He grinned but it was a crooked grin. "I think you better put up your gun," Matt said.

"I think you better get off this street, Mister," the redhead said, and shot at Matt without warning. His second shot grazed Matt's thigh. Then Matt's gun roared and caught the redhead in the middle of the chest. Matt had a reputation for doing his job with one shot.

Several people had helped the marshal over to the doctor's where he had the leg bound up. Now he was heading across Fremont Street for a fitting at Dee's.

"Marshal!" The voice called him from a doorway. He wheeled and drew at the same time, sensing it was a stranger.

"Whoa-a-a, now!" the man said, stepping out of the shadows of the porch. He was a big, rangy man with a hawk nose above a heavy mustache, and he spoke with the easy drawl of a Texan. "I'm not here to make trouble, Marshal—I'd just like a word with you."

Matt eyed the man. "Yeah," he said suspiciously.

"My name is Price," the tall cattleman said. "I'm trail boss for the Doorkey brand that's camped a few miles outside of town. Red Malone was one of my men . . ."

Well, here it is, Matt thought.

"The boys was telling me about the trouble—how you gave him a break before you shot . . ." The Texan paused a moment, then went on, "What I want to see you about is this: Red had his boy along with us on the drive north. Now, I'll probably finish up the sale of the herd today, and tomorrow we'll head back to Texas. We're all single men, and we don't none of us know anything about raising a twelve-year-old youngster. Besides, I reckon he should be where he can go to school this winter . . ."

Matt thought it over. "He doesn't have any folks back in Texas?"

"Not a one."

"Well, I killed his daddy—guess I'm responsible for him," Matt said. He knew that Verna wasn't going to like it.

"That sure takes a load off of my mind," the trail boss said, and held out a hand to Matt. "I'm much obliged.

I'll have him over to your office early this afternoon."

Matt walked off slowly. *Pretty quick and easy*, he thought, *the way some folks can give away a human being.*

After he was fitted for his suit, Matt met Verna in front of the millinery and they walked back along Fremont Street to the Buffalo House for the noon meal. Sitting across from her as they waited for their order, he saw again her soft beauty as the sunlight coming through the window touched her hair and bathed her face in a golden glow.

She must have seen the look in his eyes, for she reached across the table and laid a small white hand on his, and whispered, "I love you, Matthew."

The words warmed him and for the thousandth time he marveled that he, Matthew Cash, at 36, and after 12 years of being a peace officer in rough, dirty and savage trail towns, had found a woman like this. He knew that he had to tell her now.

"The trail boss for the Doorkey brand just stopped me. He said this man Malone had his son along on the drive—a twelve-year-old youngster . . ."

Her eyes widened, and there was genuine sorrow on her face. "Oh, Matthew, that's terrible," she said. "I suppose they'll take him back to Texas to his people."

"That's just it," Matt said, "he doesn't have any people."

"Then what are they going to do?"

Matt turned his head and watched a homesteader's wagon roll slowly down the street. "I told him I'd take the boy," he said finally.

"You?"

Matt nodded. "Us," he amended.

She looked at him in disbelief. "Matthew—how could you agree to a thing like that?"

"What else could I do? If I don't take care of the boy, then who will?"

"I don't know," she said, and there were tears at the corners of her eyes. "But why should we be saddled with a half-grown boy just as we're going to be married?"

He knew how she felt; she had dreamed a young woman's dream for over a year now, planning this wedding down to the smallest detail. Her father, Jake Morgan, owned Buffalo Bend's only bank, and had a half interest in the hotel. He had ordered her gown from Paris, and there was a stack of cases of imported champagne in the back of the grocery store for the reception. Matt knew just how much all of this meant to her; still, he felt disappointed. He didn't feel moral or self-righteous about what he had done. It was simple: He had made the boy an orphan and now he had to take him in—at least until they found another home for him.

He looked across the table at Verna. "Well, honey, what else can I do?" But she kept her eyes on the plate.

The rest of the meal was eaten in silence, and when they were through he paid the girl at the cash counter, and they stepped out onto Fremont. He walked her back to the millinery shop. Then, with a brief goodby, he turned and went back along the street to his office and checked with Mead Barlow, the day deputy.

Mead frowned at his limp, saying, "You ought to be off of that leg, Matt—I'll take your shift, tonight."

"Thanks, anyway, Mead," he said, "but it doesn't bother me too much. One shift at a time is enough for any man when these trail crews are in. You'll be plumb wore out by evening."

That afternoon Matt went down the line to see Annie

about the broken windows. She told him that her girls had heard about the cowpoke's son and had taken up a collection. She handed \$75 to him. "For the boy."

On his way back to his office, he stopped by the undertaker's and paid for the funeral, adding money out of his own pocket, for Malone had had just seven dollars in his pocket when he died.

At four o'clock the trail boss, Price, rode into town with the boy up behind his saddle. With Price were 21 cowboys who had come in for the funeral. Price stopped in front of the marshal's office, where Matt had a saddled horse waiting at the hitch-rail. As Matt came down the steps, he glanced at the freckled-faced boy sitting behind Price. His eyes were red and Matt knew that he had been crying.

"Marshal," Price said gruffly, "this is Luke Malone."

"Luke, huh?" Matt said thoughtfully. "That sounds like a name from the Bible."

The boy nodded and studied Matt with his reddened eyes.

"Well, we have something in common, then. My name is Matthew—that's from the Bible, too."

The undertaker's black-lacquered rig came down the street. Matt mounted his sorrel and they fell in behind on the way to the cemetery, which lay on a knoll a mile east of town.

The sermon was brief, the Reverend Jasper Jones dryly dwelling upon the sin this puncher had unwittingly committed when he shot all of the upstairs windows out of a certain lady's business establishment. The reverend went on to say, however, that though the Lord took a dim view of such procedure, He was forgiving, and more than likely would open the heavenly doors for this erring cowboy.

They rode back to town in silence. Once Matt turned in his saddle to look back, and found the impassive eyes of the youngster studying him. He faced forward again, wondering dismally how a man could make up for the death of a boy's father. It was impossible. You couldn't just say you were sorry, and expect it to heal all of the hurt in the boy. And then there was Verna; if he kept the youngster, there was sure to be trouble.

When they reined up in front of his office he was no closer to a solution. The boy slid down off the horse and stood to one side as the trail boss dismounted and walked over to Matt. Digging into his pocket, Price took out five \$20 gold pieces and handed them to Matt. "The boys and me made this up . . . Red had already spent his wages."

Matt took the money and watched the rest of the punchers walk by and solemnly tell the boy goodby. A few minutes later, they had all moved across the street to the Red Dog, leaving him and the boy standing alone in the dusty street. Matt was undecided what to do and ill at ease. Finally he turned, saying, "Well, guess maybe we'd better take your war bag over to my room at the hotel, Luke, and get you settled." He started across the street, watching the sullen-faced youngster out of the corner of his eye. Luke studied him a long moment, then picked up his bag and followed.

The next morning they got up at seven and ate breakfast downstairs in the dining room of the Buffalo House. Afterward, Matt took Luke across to his office and left him with Mead while he went to see Verna. On the way to Jake Morgan's big, sprawling mansion at the edge of town, he stopped by the house that had just been

built for them on Dobie Street. It wasn't a pretentious mansion like Jake's, but it would do. The carpenters had finished up the week before, and the furniture had been delivered from Kansas City. He and Verna were to be married Friday, and after a honeymoon up in the foothills of Tamalpais, they would move into the new house. But now they would have a 12-year-old boy to start their marriage with.

The Morgans' maid let him in, took his hat, and told him that everyone was still at the breakfast table. When he came into the dining room, Verna stood up and kissed him on the cheek. Jake told him, in his big, booming voice, to sit down and have a cup of coffee. Matt nodded to Mrs. Morgan and took a seat at the table.

"How's the leg, Matthew?" Morgan asked.

"Fine, Jake."

"Glad to hear it. Say, what's this Verna's been telling me about you taking in a dogie?"

The words were Jake's casual way of bringing the thing out in the open. Matt knew that it had already been talked over at length, and that Jake, who liked to run things, had made up his mind what should be done about the boy. But Matt hadn't got to be marshal and stayed alive at the job waiting for advice. He usually listened attentively to Jake Morgan and then went ahead and did things his own way. But Morgan never gave up.

"I don't see why you and Verna should be hog-tied with this youngster, Matthew," Jake said. "Tell you what we'll do—we'll find a couple that would like to take the boy to raise—"

"What if no one wants him?" Matt broke in.

"Well, if that happens, Matthew . . ." Morgan pushed back his chair and reached for cigars; he handed one to Matt, then slowly lit his own, ". . . if that happens I'll call a meeting of the Town Council and we'll appropriate a sum of money to be paid to someone to take the boy. After all, what you did was in the interest of Buffalo Bend, and the town is responsible for the boy's welfare."

Matt pretended to consider this carefully for a moment and then said, "I guess I'll have to take care of him until we find someone likely, Jake. I was planning on moving into our new house this afternoon—better place for the boy than the hotel."

"Matthew," Verna said indignantly, "if you think I'm going to take this boy on our honeymoon—!"

"I wasn't figurin' on that, Verna—"

"Well, then, how can you—" Verna burst out.

"It'll work out," he said. "Now, just take it easy." He got to his feet, knowing that he had better leave before things got out of hand. "I've got to be going, folks. Thanks for the coffee."

Verna went to the door with him. She stood on tiptoes, kissed him firmly on the mouth and said, "Please, Matthew!"

"We'll see," he said, putting on his hat and coat. He went down the walk and swung up onto the big, raw-boned sorrel mare that stood patiently in the morning heat.

Matt and Luke ate an early lunch at the Buffalo House and afterward moved their meager possessions into the new house on Dobie Street. As he put away his few possessions, Matt was struck with the fewness of them: some clothes, a spare six-shooter, a gold watch of his father's which no longer ran, and a tintype of his mother. After 12 years as a wandering (Continued on page 90)

The Last Laugh

**The war had been over for ten long years
but Stan was back in Germany to kill a
lovely girl he had known for only one night**

By HARRY HARRISON

STAN lay back on the pine needles, breathing in the strong, fresh, pungent scents, and closed his eyes against the warm morning sun that flowed down through the branches against his face. He felt languid, lazy; the breeze was gentle and was filled with the rich odor of the spring earth. He felt so good he didn't want to do anything but lie there.

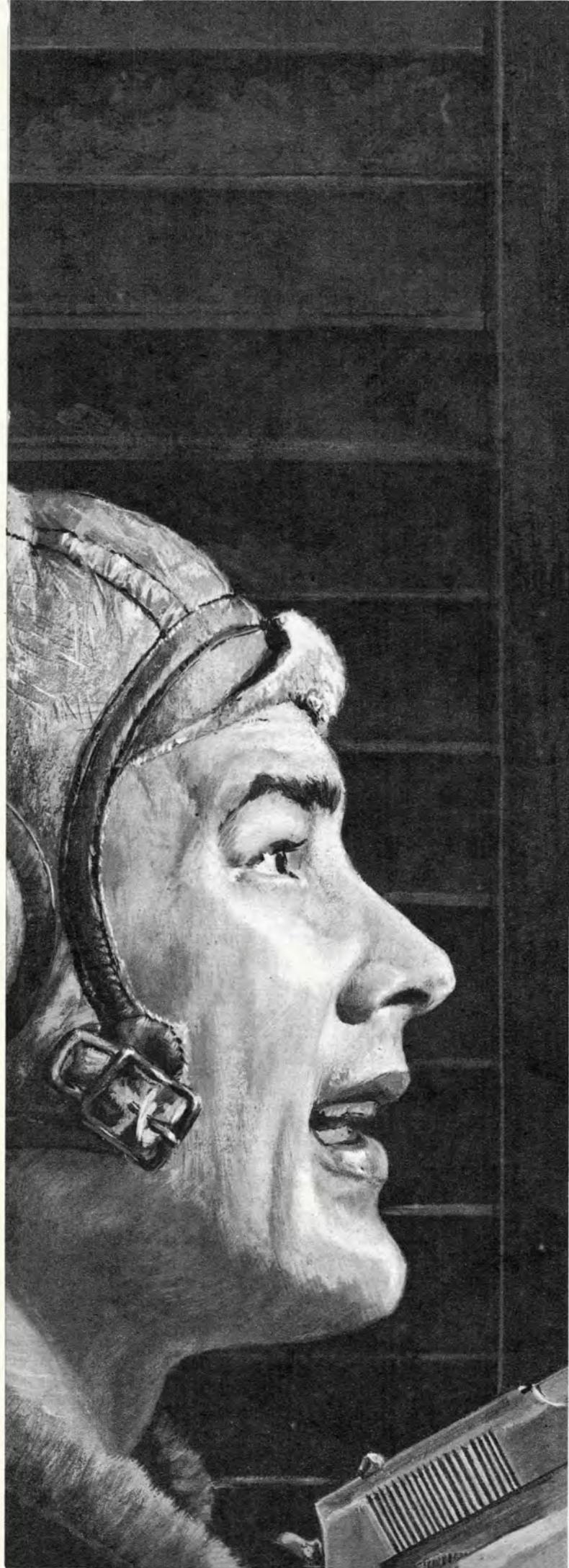
Then he remembered why he had come back to Germany: He was here to revenge what they had done to him in the little valley right below where he sat. He sat up abruptly then and began to sharpen the German bayonet he was carrying.

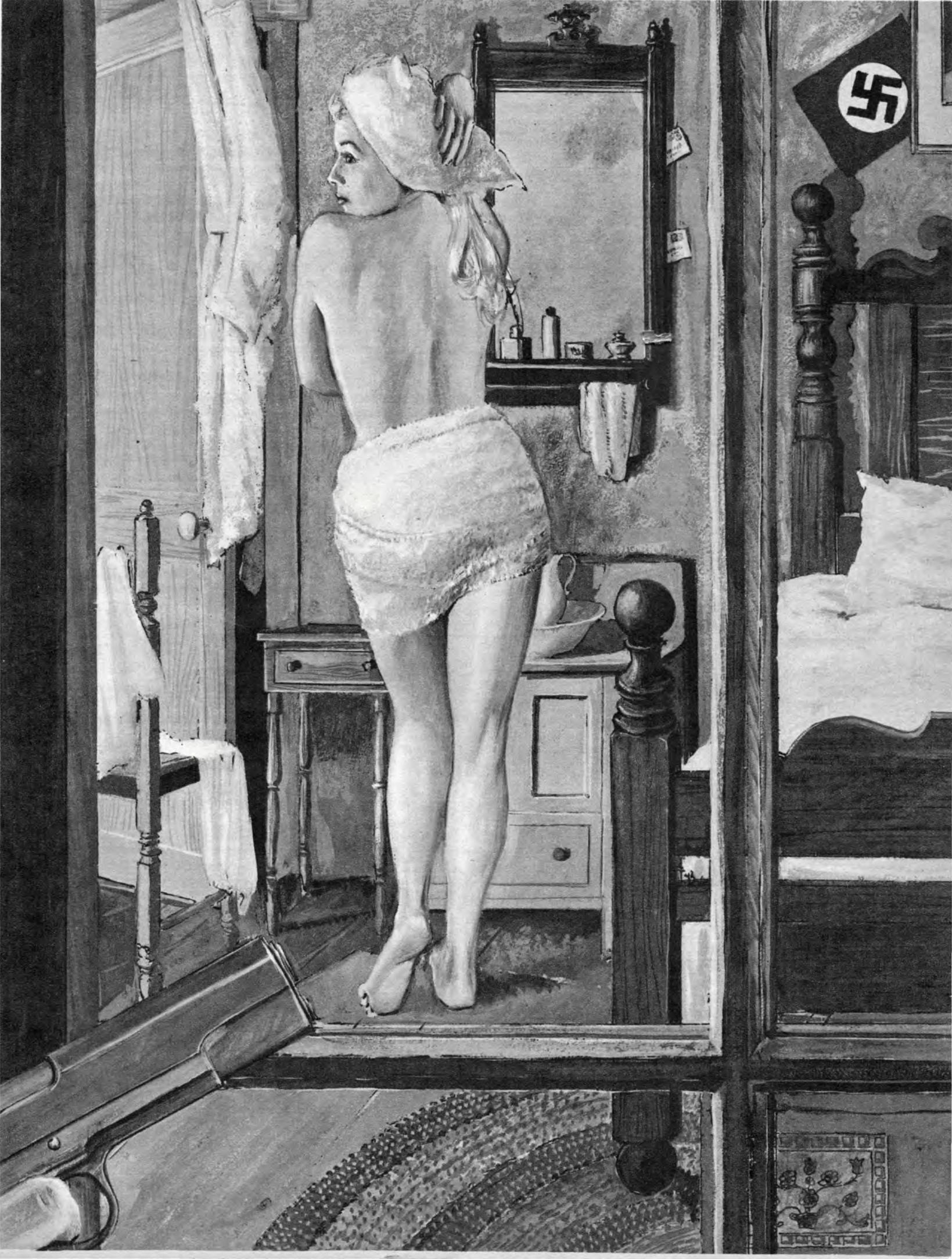
Ten years had passed, ten long, unhappy years. Peace had come, but not to Stan. Battles still raged in his mind, and he was here to end them forever. Stroke by stroke he put a killing edge on the bayonet in the warm sunshine. Then he tested the edge and he knew it was ready. He was going to kill her. But where she had acted cruelly and humiliated him, he would do it quickly and cleanly. He wouldn't be a butcher; a single thrust, and she would be dead.

He had gone over it so often in his mind that it was like watching a familiar play. When he came into the room, she would turn, her eyes wide, and she would say, "You!" The rest of her words would be choked off as the bayonet drove into her body. She would fall then, with the swastika-decorated handle sticking out of her side, half hidden by the swell of her breasts.

When he thought of her full woman's body, his palms began to sweat and the bayonet lay limply in his hand. The pine trees closed around him and he was seeing them for the first time, that time so many years ago. . . .

Their bomber had been hit over Frankfurt, and because he was the ball turret gunner, he was the first one to see the inboard port engine burst into flame.





The pilot feathered the prop, and the B-17 was limping along on three engines when the leaking gas caught fire. The streamers of flame washed right past his turret and he could feel the scorching heat.

After that it was just a frightening race against death. Grinding the turret into position so he could open the hatch, he fumbled at the tiny levers with his thick electric gloves. Inside the plane, everything was confusion; the crewmen were shouting and stumbling around on the empty shell cases that covered the floor.

Stan's chute had been knocked off the hook where he left it and he had to paw around on the deck for it. He finally found it, soaked with blood, behind Baldy, the waist gunner, who was dead. By the time he had struggled into it, the rest were gone and the plane was dropping off into its last dive.

LIEUTENANT Connors, the pilot, came climbing back then and saw him. "For God's sake," the pilot shouted, "what're you doing here? Get the hell out before we hit!"

Stan was nearest to the waist window and he went out of it head first. The tops of the trees were right below, so he pulled his rip cord without counting. He never knew what happened to Lieutenant Connors.

Seconds after the chute burst open above his head, the first branches brushed against his feet. He splintered and crashed through more of them before the chute caught and stopped him short with a snap.

Everything was quiet then, and all he could do was hang there, swinging slowly back and forth. He heard the bomber crash with a deafening roar, and he could see the eerie reflection of the flames. After a while the flames died down and the stars shone clearly overhead through the pine branches.

For the first time he realized the danger of his position and started to do something about it. He groped in his flight jacket and found his lighter; he dropped it, carefully listening for it to hit the ground. The ground seemed close, so he took the chance of cutting the risers with his pocket knife. The fall knocked the wind out of him, but he didn't break any bones. I'm supposed to bury the chute, he thought, but it was high in the tree. All he could do was limp off, away from the burned-out plane.

He walked until he saw the house in the small valley below him. The light in the window shone like a warm beacon in the damp night.

He recalled a lecture on "Escape And Evasion" techniques: *Avoid houses and towns when downed behind enemy lines.* They said that German civilians had killed a lot of fliers before they could surrender. That was all very well and he believed it, but now the lecturers were sleeping in heated barracks while he was here in the middle of a German forest. It had been over 24 hours since he had crawled out of the sack at the base in England, and he was exhausted. His face had been cut by the unseen branches, and the rain had seeped inside his clothes and soaked him to the skin. There was no plan or reason in his actions; he just knew that the light below meant warmth and food. He stumbled forward down the face of the hill.

When he was a few hundred yards from the house, a measure of instinctive caution slowed him down. Trying to walk quietly, he made a slow half-circle of the cottage that loomed up ahead of him. It wasn't as big as he had thought at first; most of the bulk was caused by the barn that stood just behind it. There was a rustle of hay

and a low mooing from the barn. Stan skirted wide around it, so that he wouldn't rouse the animals, and moved toward the house.

A sudden brightening of the illuminated window caused him to drop on his face in the wet grass. A hazy figure set a kerosene lamp near the window and retreated. Slowly he crept along the wall, his .45 in his hand, until he could see into the room. It was a bedroom with a single rumpled bed. There was a figure in the shadows of a large wall closet. As he watched, a girl stepped out of the closet and shut the door.

She was a beautiful young girl with corn-yellow hair hanging loosely below her shoulders. She wore an old bathrobe tied tightly at her waist that outlined her full figure clearly through the soft material. She carried a towel over one arm. Walking to the far wall, opposite Stan, she draped the towel over a washstand and undid the cord at her waist.

For an instant he thought of pulling away, but he didn't. The war, the wrecked plane—all were forgotten in a more basic emotion as she pulled off the robe and threw it over the foot of the bed.

The girl wore a long cotton nightgown that covered her from neck to knee. Seizing the hem of the nightdress, she slipped it up over her body in a single graceful motion. Her legs were long and handsome in the lamplight. The mass of her hair caught at the neck of the garment, and her heavy breasts swung excitingly under her arched figure as she tugged at it. With a final tug the nightdress pulled free and she straightened up, naked except for the golden hair that hung now over one shoulder. Her pose was as natural as life itself, and one that a man is rarely privileged to see.

Breathing heavily, Stan swayed outside the window, hardly aware of where he was. The girl lowered her arms and bent over the washstand. When she was finished washing, she draped the towel around her hips and reached for a toothbrush. At this moment, her eyes met his in the mirror that hung above the washstand. Their eyes held an instant. Then she moved with the speed of a frightened animal and snatched up the robe from the bed.

STAN stayed rooted to the spot, not knowing what to do. Then the girl was throwing open the window and it was too late. She was a figure of wrath as she leaned over him, her voice shrill and loud. "Du schweinehund, vos . . ." The stream of insults cut off as she got a better look at him. Her unbelieving eyes moved down his body, examining the strange helmet, the flying suit and boots, the heavy automatic in one hand. The shrillness left her voice and she tensed.

"You—American?" she said in English. "Come in. I will open the door." Then she was gone from the window.

Before he could decide what it all meant, she had the door open and was waving him in. Half unwillingly he scuffed forward, examining the room with his gun ready.

"Do not worry," she said with a warm smile. "I am alone in the house."

Stan didn't trust her. He searched the house, but it was empty, as she had said. He carefully let down the hammer of the automatic and put it back in the holster. When he returned to the kitchen, she had a pot of coffee boiling on the stove.

"My name is Anna," she said as she poured a cup for him. "My father and brother are in the Wehrmacht, so I



As Stan fought his way clear of the screaming girl, Rudi ran into the bedroom and smashed him in the jaw with his rifle.

tend the farm alone. I saw a plane crash tonight, it was horrible. Was it yours? I think war is terrible. I will be glad when it's over. What is your name?"

She was busy at the stove all the time she talked, slicing potatoes and bacon into a skillet. The murmur of her voice was punctuated by the rattle of the pans. She would ask one question and then go on to another without waiting for an answer. It reminded Stan of the girls he knew at home, and he smiled and relaxed in the chair.

His eyes followed her busy movements and he remembered that she had nothing on under the robe. He felt vaguely ashamed. This girl—an enemy really—was being kind to him. Yet he couldn't help thinking of her body as he had seen it through the window.

They talked more while he bolted down the food and marveled at his luck in finding this one house in all of Germany. Anna hated the war and only wanted the world to be at peace again.

While he was finishing his last cup of ersatz coffee, he noticed that the sky was lightening in the east.

"I'll have to go now," he said, pushing his chair back from the table.

Anna reached out and touched the collar of his jacket. "Lieber Gott!" she said. "Your clothes are soaked and you will get your death if you go outside like that. You must let me dry them by the fire first."

She fumbled with the unfamiliar zipper at his neck and he reached up to help her. When he touched her warm flesh, something else happened altogether. Her eyes looked up into his. She was shivering slightly, and he knew it wasn't with cold. Then her lips were against his, moist and warm and open. His hands moved of their own will and her robe fell open. She was as he had seen her before, only closer, much closer.

Stan woke up suddenly with a start. *How could he have fallen asleep, here in the middle of the enemy country?* He threw back the thick eiderdown quilts and looked quickly around. The bedroom was empty and his clothes were gone. A pang of fear shot through him, and

he started to leap out of the bed just as Anna came through the door.

"Stay there or you will get a chill." She laughed. "I have put your clothes to dry by the stove. They will not take long." As she pointed through the doorway, the robe that hung unbelted from her shoulders fell open. His eyes were drawn to her body as by a magnet.

Anna laughed again and the robe rustled to the floor. Then the long satiny length of her body slid under the covers next to his and he forgot that he had ever wanted to leave the warmth of the bed.

It happened only minutes later, in the middle of a kiss. There was the sound of heavy boots on the steps outside and the squeaking of the door. Stan started to jump up, but Anna hung onto him with the fury of a wildcat. Her nails sank into his flesh and her muscular legs wrapped around his. All the time she was shrieking wildly in German.

She was strong for a woman, and as he struggled free, her fingernails ripped bloody welts across his back. He flung her against the wall, but it was too late. The boots thudded across the floor and a large German soldier was in the doorway. Blinking in surprise under the lip of his steel helmet, he clutched the strap of the rifle slung across his back.

"I have trapped us a fine white American fish, Rudi," she screamed in German and laughed. "All you have to do is catch him."

Though the hulking soldier looked slow and stupid, he moved swiftly. Stan wasn't clear of the encumbering sheet when the rifle butt slashed down and caught him on the side of the jaw. There was a crack inside his head and a wave of pain. He fell, drooling blood and broken teeth across the floor.

His jaw was broken, he could tell by the grating pain when he tried to move it. All he could do was lie there, sick with pain and shame while Anna got out of the bed. She dressed slowly, without shame, while she explained to the soldier what had happened.

That was the worst part. She talked and laughed, making gestures that were painfully clear. Rudi laughed, too, until the tears rolled from his eyes, but the muzzle of his rifle never moved from Stan's head.

The whole thing had been a trap, and he had fallen for it completely. She must have planned it right away, while she was walking from the window to the door. And it had worked perfectly. Evidently, Rudi was on some kind of night duty at a nearby camp. He came to her every morning when he was through. Anna had seen to it that the American flyer had stayed until Rudi arrived. Neither she nor her soldier showed the slightest embarrassment at the way she had done it. In fact, they seemed to think it was a tremendous joke.

Stan felt shame enough for all of them as he lay naked and half covered by the rumpled and bloody bedclothes. Shame at his own weakness and stupidity; shame at the animal-like callousness of the two people who were going through his clothing.

They smiled over his automatic and discussed how much money they could sell it for. They quarreled over the thick wad of paper marks in his escape pack. Rudi took most of them and Anna settled for his boots; they fitted fine when she put on a few pairs of socks. The only time they noticed him was when Anna spied his watch and the two of them pulled at his limp wrist like a pair of hounds worrying a bone.

Only when the division of the (Continued on page 79)

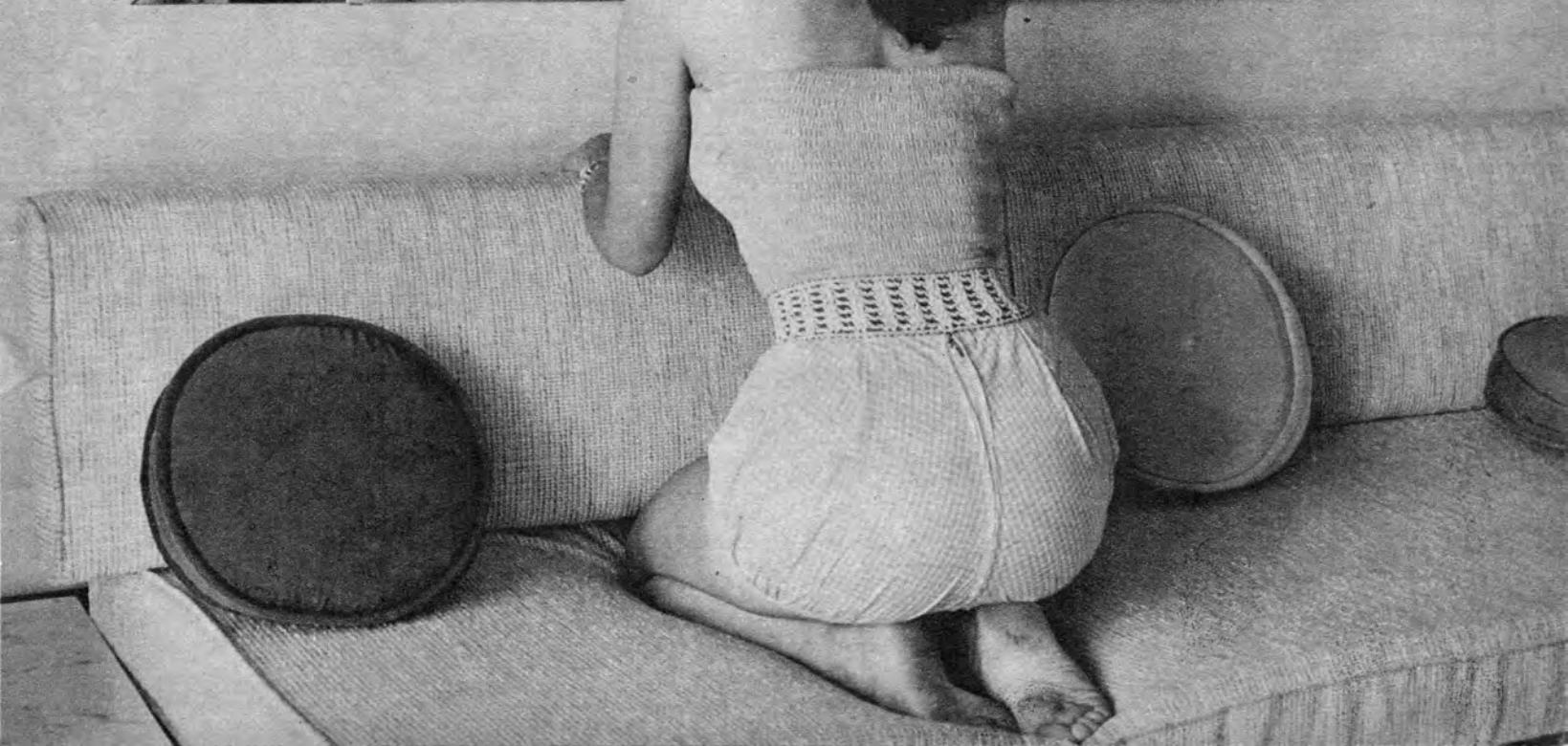


The perfect photographer's model can turn herself into an exotic temptress, a small-town tomboy or a sophisticated debutante at the snap of a finger. Sultry Amy Rebetti's trim 33-21-33 figure, her flashing hazel eyes and shoulder-length brown hair are just right for performing these wonders. To prove she can play any part at all, Amy was Santa Claus's pixie in a Long Island department store last Christmas. "It was good professional training," Amy says. "I'd do anything to help advance my career in the movies, television and theater." Then she adds, "There's only one thing that will stop me, that's the right man offering me the job that I want most—marriage. Maybe I'll be lucky enough to do both—for awhile. But when I have a family, that's going to be my only career."



PHOTOS BY ED LETTAU

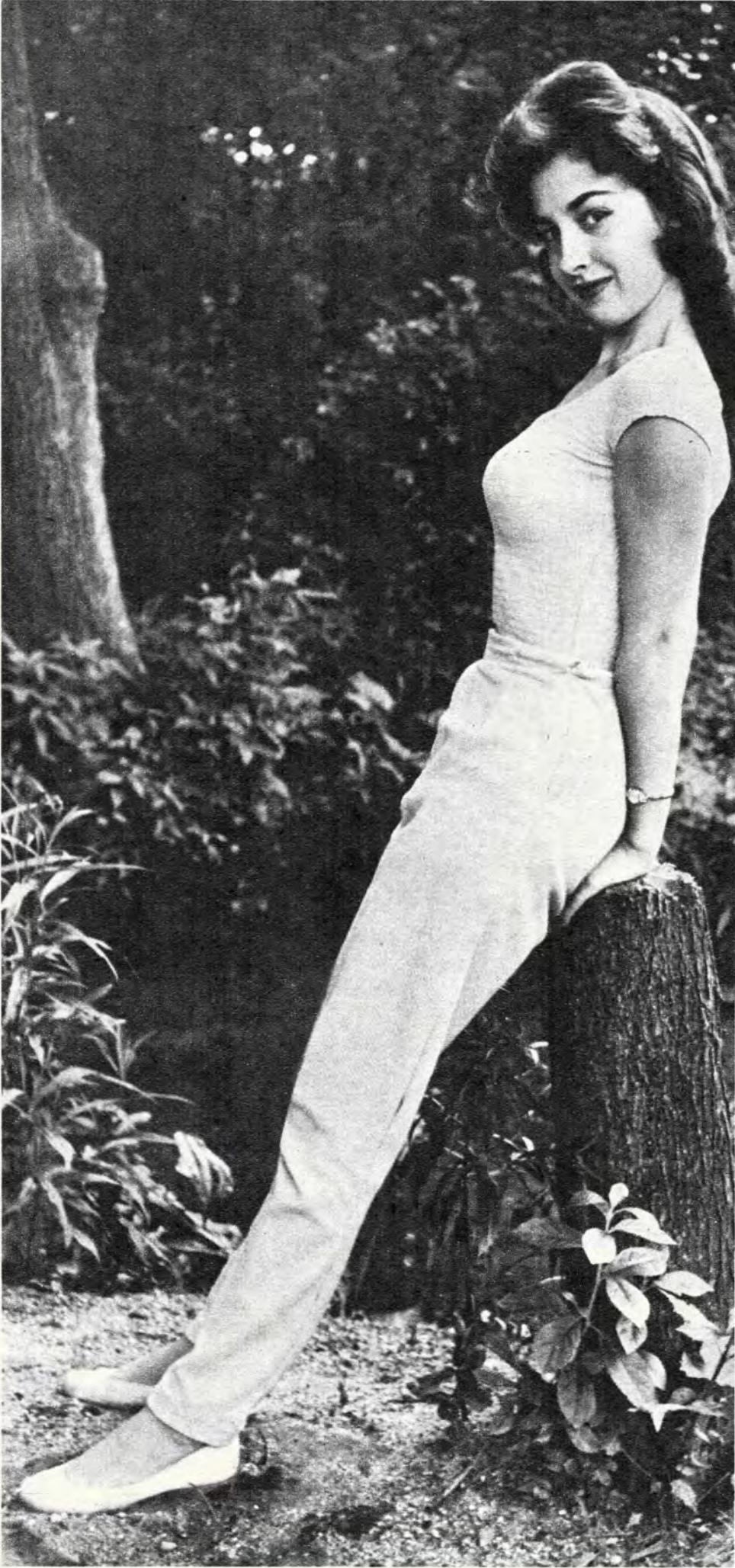
A SIGHT FOR TIRED EYES





Brooklyn-born Amy Rebetti was a Dodger fan before she could even pronounce "baseball." But now, with the Dodgers in Los Angeles, she goes to Madison Square Garden to watch the N. Y. Knickerbockers play professional basketball. Actually, though, Amy would rather participate in sports than watch from the sidelines. "Being active, I can eat what I like and not worry about my weight," she says. "Dancing is my favorite activity, with swimming and ice skating next. I find that sports are the best way to keep my figure the way I like it."

And the way we like it, too.





I REMEMBER BABE RUTH

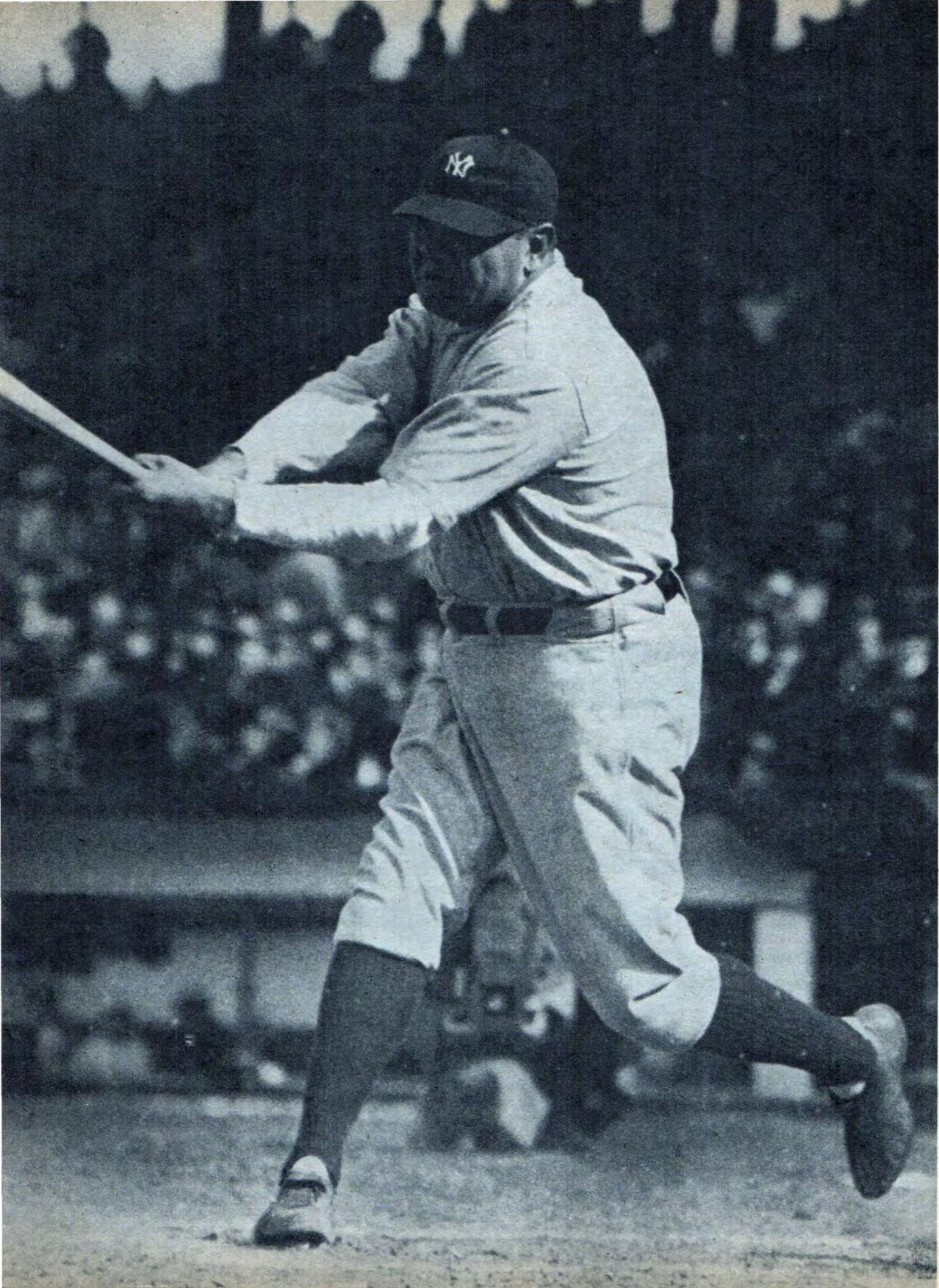
The Bambino outhit and outclassed everybody in baseball.
But to me he's still just the kid with a heart as big as his bat

By JOHN DREBINGER

A LONG about July or August some power hitter will break into the headlines. He'll be running so many days and so many games ahead of Babe Ruth's record of 60 homers in one season. It won't excite me. I've been covering baseball a long time, and I doubt that the mark the great Bambino set in 1927 will ever be erased. A lot of ballplayers have come close. But they all fade when it comes to matching that terrific September pace of 17 home runs set by the big fellow just 31 years ago.

Still, I could be wrong. But this you can say for sure: No one ever will surpass the way the Babe achieved his successes. His flair for showmanship was tremendous because it came naturally. He had absolutely no inhibitions. He said what he had to say when he felt like saying it, and he swore when he felt like swearing, regardless of who happened to be around.

There was something majestic about the way his towering drives soared over the Polo Grounds roof or sailed deep into the right-field bleachers of Yankee Stadium.



And to this day, no one ever has come close to matching him in drama—delivering that big blow when the chips were down. In a spot where another guy would choke up, the Bambino would casually blast it out of the park, then trot around the bases in his unforgettable, choppy stride.

The day they opened Yankee Stadium in the spring of 1923, the Babe belted one deep into the stands. In 1929, a few hours after he married his second wife, the former Claire Hodgson, he smashed a tremendous homer in the Stadium and then proudly doffed his cap to his bride as he rounded third base. In the first All Star Game, played in Chicago in 1933, it was the Babe who supplied the opening fireworks. His two-run homer won for the American Leaguers, 4-2.

Years after he had retired, the Babe appeared in an Old Timers game at the Stadium and belted one into the top deck of the right-field stand. Well, maybe it was a mite foul. But it was a mighty sock just the same, and the crowd gave him a thundering ovation.

There was a curious episode behind the scenes that day. The pitcher was the once invincible fireballer, Walter Johnson. The pair had faced each other many times in their heyday but never with quite the same feelings as on this occasion. Just as the kindly Walter went to the mound, he remarked, "I'll have to keep that ball outside. I don't know how good the big guy's reflexes are and I don't want to hit him."

After clouting the ball, the Babe said, "You know, I was scared as hell I might hit the old codger if I didn't come around on the ball enough."

But what stays with me most of all is George Herman

Ruth's supreme confidence in his ability to do what he felt had to be done. He was never boastful, but the thought of failure never seemed to occur to him.

Once, during an exhibition tour, Mark Roth, then the traveling secretary of the Yanks, was worried because the game was going into extra innings. If the team missed their six-thirty train, it meant hanging around until midnight. Roth kept bobbing in and out of the dugout, until the Babe's big voice boomed, "Quit stewing, Mark, and get them cabs ready. Here's where we break it up." And break it up the Babe did, as he crashed one high over the center-field fence.

Only once do I recall ever hearing him express a doubt, and then it was after the event had taken place. This was on the occasion of the oft-told "called shot" homer in the 1932 World Series in Chicago, when he pointed to the center-field corner of Wrigley Field and smacked Charlie Root's next pitch into the stands right where he had pointed.

On that hilarious and triumphant train ride back to New York, the Babe became momentarily thoughtful. "You want to know what I'm thinking?" he said. "What a helluva sucker I would've looked like if I'd missed that pitch."

The Babe himself was always good-naturedly aware that his appearance was rather comical: his pigeon-toed walk, his huge body on skinny legs, his round, moon-face and broad, upturned nose. Once, on an off-day in St. Louis, he went out to the zoo with a horde of admiring youngsters trailing behind him. The second he entered the monkey house, there was a great commotion as a chimpanzee started scampering up and down the



The Babe, who had spent most of his youth in an orphanage, loved kids—especially the sick, lonely ones in hospitals.

The Yankees' home-run twins, Ruth and Lou Gehrig (l.), hit back-to back. But they had little in common off the field.

bars of his cage and chattering at the Babe. The youngsters screamed with delight. "You see that, kids?" he bellowed. "I knew damn well that hairy buzzard could never forget a mug like mine."

But getting back to that famous homer in Chicago, it wasn't the first time the Babe had called his shots. In fact, he did almost the same thing the year before, in the 1928 World Series in St. Louis. In the fourth and what proved to be the final game, the Babe was facing Wee Willie Sherdel, the Cardinals' great slow-ball pitcher. With two strikes on Ruth, Sherdel caught the return throw from his catcher, Earl Smith, and immediately fired it back. To all appearances, it was a third strike right over the heart of the plate. But umpire Cy Pfirman ruled it a "quick pitch" and refused to allow it.

A fearful row followed as Bill McKechnie, the manager of the Cards, joined his pitcher and catcher in charging the umpire. To add to the fun, the Babe stuck his bat between his legs and waved encouragement first to one side, then to the other. When order finally was restored, the Babe majestically pointed to the roof of the right-field pavilion and, incredibly, slammed the next pitch right over it.

Before the day was done, Ruth had hit three homers and ended the game with a spectacular catch. Playing left field, he raced up the foul line in front of the temporary field boxes for a high popup. From the upper deck, fans were showering him with papers and score-cards, but he never lost sight of the ball. He caught it in his gloved hand, exultantly flaunted it in the faces of

the crowd and never stopped running until he plunged down the dugout steps.

It was one of the greatest one-man exhibitions I have ever seen. He had singlehandedly ripped the Cards to shreds. And that night, on the train ride back to New York, he ripped to shreds the shirt and silk pajamas of his employer, Colonel Jacob Ruppert, who kept screaming, "Don't, don't, Baby Ruth!"

A child of nature, the Bambino did everything with unrestrained enthusiasm, whether it was playing ball or rough-housing. Oddly, he seldom discussed his hitting exploits. It gave him a great thrill to see the ball skyrocket high into the air. But once it was hit, it was done and forgotten. However, whenever he would come up with a great catch or throw, he would talk about it by the hour, detailing the steps by which he had conceived and executed the masterpiece.

One day, the Babe came up with an exceptionally cute trick which killed a Tiger rally. The game was played in Detroit, and the present double-decked stands in the Briggs Stadium outfield had not been built. A fence was the only barrier in left field, where Ruth played. (While the Babe patrolled right field in Yankee Stadium, he played left field in nearly all the other American League parks.) It was a tight game, and, with a runner on second, Babe backed up against the fence for a high fly. Then, as the ball started coming down, he went through all the gestures of an outfielder who knows the worst is going to happen: He looked down at the ground, shook his head, slumped his shoulders and snapped his fingers in utter disgust. Almost (Continued on page 94)

In July, 1948, a month before he died of cancer, the Babe was honored in Yankee Stadium: "The House That Ruth Built."



* **BOOK - LENGTH FEATURE**



LINDA

It started off as a second honeymoon, but ended up with my wife falling for another guy and setting me up for a one-way trip to the electric chair

By JOHN D. MacDONALD

LOOKING back, I think it was right after the first of the year that Linda started hammering at me to take my vacation in the fall instead of in the summer. She started by talking about Stu and Betty Carbonelli and what a fine time they'd had when they went south for their vacation in November. And she talked about the terrible traffic

in the summer and how dangerous it was. This was the first year I was due to get three weeks with pay instead of just two, and she brought that up too, telling me how it would give us a real chance to get away.

I hoped it would blow over and I'd be able to talk her into taking the last three weeks in August. In fact, I put in for that early,



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in March. I thought we could rent a camp up at Lake Pleasant. That would mean only a 70-mile trip and a chance for some fishing.

Ever since Christmas we had been seeing quite a lot of the Jeffries. His first name was Brandon, but nobody would ever call him that. You instinctively called him Jeff. They were a little younger than Linda and me, and he was with the same company, but on the sales end, while I've been in the purchasing department for the past nine years—in fact, ever since I got out of the army and married Linda. Jeff was one of the top salesmen on the road and last year they brought him in and made him sales manager of the northeastern division. I guess he made out pretty well—probably a lot better than I do—and on top of that Stella, his wife, had some money of her own.

If you've ever been in purchasing, where you have to see the salesmen, you'll know what I mean when I say that Jeff was a perfect salesman type—tall and good-looking in a sort of rugged way. When he told jokes, they were on himself. He'd listen when you talked. I mean really listen, drawing you out. He had that knack of making you feel important.

Jeff kept himself in shape too. He really worked at it—swimming and tennis and so on. And I guess he had a sun lamp home because he had a good tan the year round. All of which added to the kind of impression he made.

When you're married to a woman like Linda, you develop a sort of sixth sense for those jokers who are on the make. We couldn't ever go to a big party without somebody trying to hang all over her. I hate parties like that, but they made Linda sparkle. People were all the time telling her that she looked like Paulette Goddard, but I could never see it.

One thing Linda really had, and that's a beautiful figure. I have never seen a better figure anywhere, on anybody.

BUT LIKE I was saying, you develop a sixth sense when you have a wife like Linda. I watched Jeff pretty closely, worrying a little bit, because if anybody had a chance of making out, that Jeff Jeffries certainly would. But I could see that it was all right. They kidded around a lot, but I could see it was all in fun. And he was very loving with Stella, his wife, holding her hand whenever he could, and kissing her on the temple when they danced together at the club and that sort of thing. Which is funny when you think of it, because Stella Jeffries was anything but a good-looking woman. She was just awfully nice.

It certainly surprised me that I ever got to marry Linda Willestone. That was her name in high school, when I first knew her. We were in the same graduating class. It was a big school, about 7,000 total enrollment, and I was even quieter then than I am now. I worked after school most of the time, so I didn't have a chance to get in on those extra things a lot of the others did. Linda belonged to a different world.

I got out of the army and got a job and a week later I saw her on the street and recognized her. I walked right up to her and said, "Hello, Linda." I told her who I was and how I'd been in high school with her. We went into a place and had coffee. Then I saw that she didn't

look good at all. She looked as if she'd been sick. Her clothing was shabby. She said frankly that she was broke and looking for a job. She'd come in on a bus from California. It was a pretty tragic story she told me. Her people were dead. She had married a Marine and he'd been killed. He hadn't transferred his insurance to her, and his people, Kentucky people, wouldn't have anything to do with her.

She had worked for a while in California and then married an Air Corps warrant officer. He got in some kind of a jam and had been given a dishonorable discharge and it was after that happened that she found out he'd already had a wife and two children. She'd worked some more and gotten sick, and when sickness took her savings, she'd been a charity patient until she was well enough to leave. She'd worked just long enough to get together the bus fare to come home.

What happened to her had just taken the heart out of her, and it made me feel bad to see the way she was. I guess what I did was pick her up and dust her off and put the heart back in her. You could call it a rebound on her part, I guess. Not a rebound from any specific man, but a rebound from life. For me it was fine, because I never thought I would get to marry Linda Willestone.

THEY always say that the first year of marriage is the hardest. With us I think it was the best. At first Linda seemed tired all the way through, but as the months went by she began to come alive more and more. She was fond of me and grateful to me. I did not demand that she love me. I hoped it would come later, but when it didn't seem to, I didn't mind too much. It was enough to have her around, and know that wherever we went, people looked at her.

It's hard for a man to assess his own marriage. He can't say if it's good or bad. I know only that after that first year there was strain between us. Linda wanted a life that I didn't want. I told her her values were superficial; she told me life was more than waiting for death. There were no blazing quarrels. My temper is not of that breed. And in the last few years things became easier between us. We worked out a sort of compromise. She lived my way, and when we could afford it, she would take a trip, usually to Chicago. That seemed to ease her nervous tension.

Sometimes, out of irritation, she would say cruel things to me, calling me a nonentity, a zero, a statistic. But I understood, or I thought I did. She was an earthy, hot-blooded woman, and our life was pretty quiet.

As I said, I had already put in for a summer vacation and didn't tell Linda, because I was waiting for this idea of a fall vacation to blow over. But one night in late March or early March Jeff and Stella came over. It was when we'd finished a rubber of bridge and were talking while I made fresh drinks that Linda told them about her idea, and how Stu and Betty Carbonelli had had such a good time. "Betty said that you can get beach cottages for practically nothing on the west coast of Florida in October and November because their season doesn't really start down there until around Christmas. They were on Verano Key, quite a way south of Sarasota. They said they had the whole beach to themselves."

As I put the filled glasses down on the bridge table, Jeff said, "You know, that sounds pretty good to me. What do you think, Stell?"

The bridge game was ignored while we all talked it over. I said it was too far to go for just three weeks, particularly if, as Stu Carbonelli said, you had to have a car. You could subtract six days for the trip, going and coming. A full week gone out of three.

Jeff thought that over for quite a while, frowning, and then he looked at Stella and said, "Hey! Here's a deal. We have to have a car, right? We could rent places close together. I could fix it, Paul, so that my three weeks would start four days after yours. You and Linda could drive down and Stell and I could fly down. Then when your time was up, you both could fly back and Stell and I could leave at the same time and drive back. If we were close together, we would only need one car, wouldn't we? And then we'd both have two weeks and four days down there. Driving both ways is a chore. But one way . . ."

Actually, Jeff's idea made it sound a lot better. I didn't want to take our vacation along with the Jeffries if we were going to an expensive place, because I knew we couldn't keep up with them. But Stu had talked a lot about the place they had gone, and it certainly wasn't any Miami.

Stella, who had been dubious at first, gradually became enthusiastic, and the three of them concentrated their forces on me.

I'm quiet. And I'm pretty stubborn too. I guess those things go together pretty often. There they were, the three of them all heckling me. Florida had begun to sound better to me, but it was the idea of the three of them leaning on me that put my back up. I finally said flatly that I'd decided to take my vacation in August and go up to Lake Pleasant.

I was sorry to see Jeff and Stella leave so early, because I knew Linda would be gunning for me.

But it didn't work out that way at all. She was quiet after Jeff and Stella left. I helped her clean up the place, waiting every minute for the explosion. It just didn't come. We went up to bed.

Right here, in order to tell how that night was, I guess I've got to explain a little about the physical side of our marriage. I'd never been with a woman until we were married. I kind of resented her knowing more about it than I did, but in some ways I was glad she did because it made things a lot easier at first. She was always moody about it. By that I mean that sometimes she'd seem to want to and a lot of the time she wouldn't. The times she didn't, she acted like she was bored and just wished it would be over.

Anyway, on this night after Jeff and Stella went home and we went up to bed with me waiting for the explosion, it didn't come. She fooled around and I was in bed first. Finally, she came out of the bathroom and stood in the doorway with the light from the bathroom shining right through some sort of filmy thing I'd never seen on her before. She stood there for a long time. As I said, I've never seen a better figure on a woman in my life. She turned the light off, finally, and I could hear the rustling, and then smell a new kind of perfume she had put on, and then feel her strong arms around me as she brought her lips down on mine there in our dark bedroom.

When it was all over, she lay in my arms and said, "This is the way it should always be, darling. Now you know why I want us to go to Florida. I want a new start for our marriage. I want a second honeymoon, a proper honeymoon this time."

Well, I knew I wanted it to happen again just that



Linda stood in the doorway with the light shining through her nightgown. I had never seen a better figure in my life.

way, and if I had to go to Florida to guarantee it, then I would go to Florida. It was as though I hadn't even been married before. She was like a stranger, and I fell in love with her all over again.

In the morning she called Stella Jeffries and I told Jeff down at the plant. It was all set.

I told Rufus Stick, the director of purchasing, my plans and we settled on Friday, October 22, as my final working day and I would report back on Monday, November 15. As soon as that was arranged, I phoned Jeff from my office and he said he would get to work on it. He phoned me that evening at home and said he had approval to start his vacation on Wednesday, October 27, and he would have to be back at work on Thursday, November 17.

It was about a week later that Linda had the Jeffries and the Carbonellis over one night. Stu brought his 35 millimeter slides and a portable projector and we

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took down a picture so Stu could flash the slides on the wall. The slides were fine. He gave us the name of the man who owned the beach cottages and rented them out. Jeff said he would write on a company letterhead and make the arrangements.

Stu and Betty had to leave early because of their baby-sitter. We sat around and talked about the pictures and what we would take. We had a mild argument about which car we would take. It was mild because I certainly didn't want to subject Jeff and Stella to driving back in our six-year-old sedan, not after the cars he was used to driving. Jeff was perceptive about it. He said, "Look, kids, I've got a new one on order for delivery next month. By October it will be nicely broken in, and there'll be plenty of room in it for all our junk." So we left it at that.

We had one of the hottest, stickiest summers on record. But not even the baking city could subdue Linda's enthusiasm for the trip. It seemed to mean an awful lot to her.

Actually, we didn't see as much of the Jeffries that summer as I had thought we would. They belonged to the country club and we didn't. On the hot days Jeff would go right to the club from the office, and Stella would be there by the pool waiting for him. I expected Linda to start her annual campaign to get me to join, but she didn't. She was very easy to get along with that summer. She sang when she worked. She took sunbaths in our small back yard. I had made a frame for her and tacked striped canvas on it so she could have privacy. She sunbathed in the nude, oiling herself heavily so as not to harshen her skin, until she was the same even, golden tan from head to toe.

The last days seemed to drag but at last it was Friday, the 22nd. On Friday evening Jeff and Stella brought their car over. Their stuff was all packed in it, and ours was ready to load. They took my car when they left, and my garage door key. They would use my car and leave it in my garage before they left.

Linda and I loaded the car and went to bed. In the morning we closed up the house, got an early start, and had breakfast on the road. We arrived in Hooker on Monday evening at five o'clock. The trip was uneventful. The car drove easily, and Linda was uncommonly quiet during the trip.

Hooker was a small, sleepy town. It was still hot and there were a few dusty cars parked on the wide main street. I parked in front of Jethro's Market and went in to pick up the keys as arranged with our landlord.

Lottie Jethro was a vast, faded young woman, with a cotton dress stretching tightly across her abundances. She gave me the keys and said, "You go right on out this road. It runs along the bay and then you come to a sign points west says Verano Key Beach. Get out onto the Key and turn left, that's south, and go about a mile and you come to a little sign says Cypress Cottages, and that's it. You'll have to try the keys because I don't know which is which. But they're both alike."

We drove about six miles south and found the sign and crossed a frail wooden bridge onto the Key. The road down the Key was a sand road, the hump in the middle so high that it brushed the differential. We passed two houses that looked closed. The sun was settling toward the steel blue Gulf. Sometimes the road



I built a canvas pen in our back yard for Linda to sunbathe in the nude. She soon had a golden tan from head to toe.

would wind near enough so that we could see a wide expanse of pale beach and lazy waves that heaved up and slapped at the sand. Water birds ran busily along the water line, pecking at the sand.

The two cottages were about 100 feet apart. I asked Linda which one she wanted and she said it didn't make any difference. I parked by the southerly one. I unlocked the door and we carried our things in. We unlocked the other one and looked it over. They were alike. The Key was narrow there, and there was a long dock out into the bay at the back, and a rowboat overturned on the bank near the dock, above the high tide mark. The pump house was not far from the dock.

I got the electricity going in each cottage, got the pump started, and then drove the car over to the other cottage and unloaded the Jeffries' things. In addition to the usual baggage, they had packed a new badminton set and a gun case. I opened the gun case to see what Jeff had thought he would use. It was a Remington bolt action .22 with a four power scope. It looked new and it looked as though it would be fun for plinking at beer cans.

Linda had the food put away by the time I got back, and had started unpacking our bags. When we were through we took a walk down the beach. The big red sun was just sliding into the Gulf. About 400 yards south of us was a big house with hurricane shutters over the large windows. Almost an equal distance north of us were four small beach cabins that were deserted and badly in need of paint.

When I got up in the morning, Linda was gone. I put on swimming trunks and went out on the beach. I could see her on the beach, far to the north, a tiny figure that bent over now and then to pick up shells. I was on my

second cup of coffee when I heard her under the outside shower. She came into the kitchen in a few minutes, wrapped in a big yellow towel, her soaked bathing suit in her hand. "That water must be eighty degrees!" she said. "And there were big things out there, sort of rolling. I'll bet they were porpoises." Her eyes were shining, and she looked like a child on Saturday.

We drove up to Sarasota on Wednesday to meet the plane. Jeff and Stella said they had had a fine trip down. Jeff seemed boisterous and exuberant, but I thought Stella was rather quiet.

I drove them up to their door with a flourish, and Linda went in first and turned the lights on for them. They seemed pleased with the setup, particularly Jeff. That surprised me a little because, as with Linda, I thought he would be more likely to be enthusiastic about a more civilized environment. When they were settled we went over and sat on their porch and talked for a while.

THAT evening was the last time that the four of us were what I would call normal with each other. It all started the next day. It started without warning. At about ten o'clock we were all out on the beach. We had two blankets and towels and a faded old beach umbrella I had found in the pump house. I remember that I had a program of dance music on the portable radio.

Linda got up. She stood there with her shadow falling across me. I thought she was going to go in swimming. She said, "Come on, Jeff." I thought she was asking him to go in with her. But her tone of voice had seemed oddly harsh. Jeff got up without a word and the two of them walked down the beach, headed south.

I don't think I can explain exactly why it created such an awkward situation. Certainly Linda and Jeff could walk together, as could Stella and I, should we want to. The four of us were, I thought, friends. But it was the manner in which they left us. Had it been done in a normal way, they would have said something about walking down the beach, and coming back soon, and don't get too much sun—like that. But they just left.

Though you could see up the beach a long way to the north, you could not see far to the south. The big house south of us was on a sort of headland, and beyond it the beach curved inward and out of range of vision.

Each time I looked they were farther away, walking steadily. Then I looked again and they were gone.

I couldn't help glancing at Stella, wondering how she was taking it. She wore heavy sun glasses with tilted frames and very dark lenses. Her eyes were hidden behind them. After a time she got up without a word, took off her sunglasses and watch, tucked her pale hair into a white bathing cap and went down to the water. She swam far out with a lithe power at odds with the frail look of her body. After what seemed a long time, she swam slowly in and walked up and sat in the shade of the beach umbrella, her arms hugging her knees, looking out to sea. Our silence with each other was awkward, and the longer Jeff and Linda stayed away, the more awkward it became.

"Well, Paul," Stella said finally.

"I . . . what do you mean?"

"You wouldn't ask if you didn't know. She could have had a sign painted, I suppose. Or branded her forehead. I don't think she could have made it any more obvious."

"I don't think it's that way."

"I don't think it's any other way. I didn't want to come here. I did at first, and then I didn't. I tried to talk him out of it. I could have talked to walls or stones."

"Now, Stella."

"Don't sound soothing. Please. We've got ourselves a situation, Paul. A large one. It isn't pretty. I guessed at something of the sort . . . but not so blatant."

"We're all friends."

She turned the dark lenses toward me. "I'm your friend, Paul. I'm Jeff's friend, I hope. Not hers. Not hers, ever again. She made it plain enough. I should pack now. That would be smart. But I'm not very smart, I guess. I would rather stay and fight."

She picked up her things and went to their cottage. At noon I picked up my things and went in too. I sat on the porch and read and finally they came down the beach. They separated casually in front of our place and Linda came in.

"Long walk," I said.

She looked at me and through me. "Wasn't it, though," she said, and went on into the house.

That was the beginning. That was the way it started. Linda and Jeff were together whenever they pleased. They gave us no obvious evidence of infidelity, which would have forced it to an issue. They merely went their own casual way, as though we had changed marriage partners during the day, only to be formally sorted out again each night, quite late.

I tried to reason with her once. "Linda," I said tentatively, "we planned to have a good time down here."

"Yes?"

"You and Jeff are spoiling it for the four of us. Stell is miserable."

"That's a bitter shame."

"Last night you were gone for three hours. Not a word of excuse or explanation or anything. It's so ruthless."

"Poor Paul."

"Haven't you any sense of decency? Are you really having an affair with him?"

"Why don't you run along and catch some nice fish?" she said coldly.

That was the last time I tried.

ONE morning I watched Jeff and Linda on the beach directly in front of our cottage. He had a carton of empty beer cans. He had the .22 and he would throw a beer can out as far as he could. He would shoot and then he'd instruct Linda. He put his arm around her bare shoulders to get her into the proper position. I could hear the snapping of the shots over the sea sound, and once I heard their laughter. I sat and watched them and felt ill.

It was on Sunday, the 7th, that Stella and I went for our walk. I did not know where Linda and Jeff were. Linda had just washed the lunch dishes and gone. I was on the porch when Stella came over, a strained look about her eyes. "Want to walk with me, Paul?"

"Sure." We headed south, walking briskly. "Did they go this way?" I asked.

"No. They took the boat and went north up the bay," she said. "Jeff took his tackle. I just . . . want to walk, Paul, and I didn't want to be alone."

A half-mile beyond a rock barrier we found an old house. The flat roof had fallen in and storms had shifted plaster walls, exposing the old brick underneath. Sand

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had covered most of the shattered cement sea wall. Stella walked up the slope of the beach and sat on a tilted section of the sea wall. I sat beside her.

"I guess I give up, Paul," she said tonelessly.

"What will you do?"

"I don't know, exactly. Stop trying, for one thing. You and Linda have your reservations for next Saturday, don't you?"

"That's right."

She gave me a crooked smile. "I'll use the week getting some more sun and doing some thinking. I never ran into anything like this. I'll let him drive me back. Maybe once they're apart he'll talk about it. But even if he was abject about it, I don't think I could stay. Not after this kind of humiliation."

I put my arm around her sun-hot shoulders, moved closer to her. I held her for a long time and when she lifted her face toward me. I kissed her, tasting salt. I took my arm away awkwardly and said, "I'm sorry."

"Don't be sorry. They threw us together. We're on the outside. We can comfort each other, I guess. Anyway, Paul, I'm glad you kissed me. It makes me feel . . . well, more competent, I guess. What are you going to do?"

"I don't know. Maybe I haven't got enough pride. I keep thinking this will blow over. Maybe it won't be precisely the same again, but it will be enough for me. I don't demand much, I guess. Or maybe merit much."

She frowned and looked away from me. "Ever since I became what they coyly call marriageable, I've had a different problem. There were always plenty of them. Nice, polite, handsome, muscular young men. The thing was to decide whether it was me or the money."

"Is there that much?"

"Bushels. An obscene amount. I guess I've demanded that we live simply as sort of a continuing test of Jeff. Now I wonder if that was wrong. Maybe if I'd decided it was really me he wanted, and begun to live the way we can, he wouldn't have done this."

"Are you going to leave him?"

"Yes. And then indulge myself for a while. Play hard. Financial bandages for the bruised ego. You know, Paul, we ought to take off together. God, how they'd writhe!"

I looked at her. "But we can't, of course."

Her eyes were somber. "No. We can't." She stood up and tried to smile. "Back to the wars, Cowley."

Wednesday, the 10th of November, was the hottest day of all. Though the sky was a deep and intense blue, the water was oddly gray, the swells oily, the horizon misted. There was a feeling of change in the air.

There had been no change in either Jeff or Linda. I went out onto the beach at about ten. Stella came out about 15 minutes later, wearing a trim yellow suit. She spread her huge towel beside my blanket, went out and swam and then came back, taking her rubber cap off, shaking out her pale hair, and smiling at me. She stretched out beside me and we surrendered ourselves to the hard pulse of the sun.

I heard a sharp, snapping sound and without opening my eyes I knew it was the rifle. I propped myself up on one elbow and watched Jeff shooting at the empty cans. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Linda coming

down from our cottage. She wore, for the first time, a new swim suit which she had bought just before we left. I wondered why she had saved it until now. I wondered why she had bought it. It certainly did not become her. It was dark green, and so conservative that it looked as though she had rented it. Compared to her favorite, a wispy bikini which seemed to be supported only by faith, this green one was practically funeral. She stood close to Jeff. He stopped shooting and bent his head a bit to listen to her. Secrets.

I LAY back and shut my eyes. Some time later—I don't know how long, maybe ten minutes—I opened my eyes and saw that Jeff was sitting on the other side of Stella. His long, hard legs were brown, and the curly hair on them was bleached white. He sat looking out at the Gulf and I saw the knob of muscle stand out at the corner of his jaw as he clenched his teeth. I wondered what he was thinking.

It was still morning and the sun was high, though slightly in the east. A shadow fell across me. I looked down and saw the long, thin shadow of the rifle barrel, and the bulkier shadow of Linda. I looked back at her. She was standing behind me. She had the rifle to her shoulder and she was aiming it carefully at Stella's head. I believe that what I started to say was something to the effect that you shouldn't aim a gun at anybody, even as a joke. I said half a word before Linda pulled the trigger. The muzzle was only about three feet from my face, and the sound of the shot was much louder than any that had gone before. Stella collapsed with a small, wet, coughing noise that smeared her swim suit, throat, shoulders and big towel with bright red blood.

If you have never seen an equivalent moment of sudden, unbelievable violence, it will be impossible for you to understand the mental and emotional results of the shock. For one thing, the actual moment itself is stamped into your mind as though hammered there by a great steel die.

The second aspect, more difficult to describe, is the way shock makes subsequent thought processes unreliable. It is as though the brain makes such a convulsive effort to take in every tiny aspect of the moment of violence that it exhausts itself and, thereafter, functions only intermittently, absorbing varied memories but interspersing them with periods of blankness impossible to recall.

When I looked, stupefied, at Linda, I saw the muzzle of the rifle swing slowly toward Jeff. She worked the bolt expertly. A tiny gleaming cartridge case arched out onto the sand.

Jeff gave a great hoarse cry of panic. I tried to grab at Linda, but she moved quickly away from me. Jeff had bounded to his feet and he ran in a straight line away from us. The rifle snapped and he plunged forward, turning his right shoulder down as he fell, rolling over twice to lie still on his face. Linda fired again with great care a fraction of a second before I grabbed the gun and twisted it out of her hands. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Jeff's body twitch as she fired.

I had the gun. She looked at me. Her eyes were like frosted glass. The lower half of her face was slack. Her underlip had fallen away from her teeth. I don't know what was said, if anything, because at that point there came one of those blind spots in memory.

I remember standing there with the rifle in my hands. Linda had apparently walked up the beach some

hundred feet. She was standing in the shallow water, bending awkwardly forward and being sick. I couldn't look at the body of Stella or the body of Jeff. I've always been that way. Linda laughed at me one time a few years ago. During the night a cat had died in our yard. I couldn't touch it. I couldn't stand looking at it. I dug the hole for it and went in the house, and Linda put it in the hole and covered it up.

As I walked up to Linda she reached down and brought up sea water in her cupped hands and rubbed her mouth vigorously. She looked at me and her face was the same as before. "Go . . . report it!" she said in a thickened voice.

I took her by the wrist and tugged her toward the cottages, toward the car. Partway up the beach she let herself go limp. She lay there on the sand, her eyes closed.

"Come with me. You're sick," I said.

"No."

Again there was a gap in memory. The next thing I remember is getting into the car. There was something that impeded me and irritated me, and I didn't realize what it was. I brought my attention to focus and found that I was sitting behind the wheel with my left hand still grasping the rifle, my fingers holding it so tightly that they were cramped. I couldn't shut the car door without either releasing it or bringing it inside. I put the rifle on the back seat. I remember no aspect of the trip to Hooker. I wasn't thinking constructively about what should be done. I parked in front of the market. The Jethro woman later gave a description of the way I acted when I came in. "He came in breathing hard and looking sort of wild. He stood looking at me and licking his lips and I asked him twice what the trouble was. and

then he said his wife had shot and killed the couple in the next cottage, the other Dooley cottage. He was in his swimming pants and it was hot in the store, but he was all over goose lumps and shivering.

"Buford Rancey was in buying bread and they got this Cowley over in a chair in the back while I phoned over to Bosworth, to the sheriff's office. This Cowley sat in the chair with his eyes shut, still shaking, still licking his mouth every once in a while. Buford Rancey gave him a cigarette and he shook so bad I thought he'd miss his mouth with it.

"The road car came roaring up in front and there was just that Dike Matthews in it. That Cowley acted a little better. Dike said as how Sheriff Vernon and some folks were on their way from the county seat, and somebody better be at the market to guide them on out. Buford said as how he would do that, so then Cowley got in the big car and Dike followed him on out. People had come in the market knowing somehow there was some kind of trouble, so there were two more cars that followed along."

Because Matthews was following me in the other car, I didn't get a chance to talk to him on the way out. I pulled in front of the Jeffries cottage. Matthews pulled in beside me. You can't see the beach proper from directly in front of the cottages, on the road. He was an angular man with a weather-marked face, lean throat, wattled jaw, prominent Adam's apple and narrow blue eyes.

We got out of the cars and he looked in at the back seat of Jeff's car and said. "That the weapon?"

"Yes," I said, and opened the door to get it.

"Leave it be," he said sharply. "You put it there?"

"Yes," I said.



When Vernon said, "She was shot in the head," Jeff leaped up from the body and slugged me.

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He spat and glanced at the sky. "Well, where are they?"

"Down on the beach. We were lying in the sun. Mister Jeffries was shooting at floating cans. My wife took the rifle. She shot Missus Jeffries in the head from close range. She aimed at Mister Jeffries. He ran. She hit him and knocked him down and shot him again. I got the gun away from her. She's been . . . acting strange lately."

"Killed 'em both, eh?" he said.

"Killed Missus Jeffries. Maybe Mister Jeffries was only seriously wounded. But I think he was dead."

"Didn't you look?"

"No. I should have, but I was shocked. I went after help."

We stood on top of the sand rise and looked down at the beach. From that distance and that angle, Stella could have been sunbathing. I could see the dark glasses on the corner of her towel and the glint of her lotion bottle in the sun. My blanket was spread out beside her body.

And that was all. Jeff's body was gone. Linda was gone. "Where's the other body?" Matthews asked.

"I don't know. Maybe he wasn't as badly hurt as I thought."

"Where was he?"

"Right there," I said. "Right about there." I pointed. I walked over with him. He sat on his heels and looked at the sand. He stood up.

Six strangers had moved down to within 20 feet of Stella's body. They were all staring at the body. "Git back, dammit. Git back!" Matthews bawled. He strode over angrily, snatched up my balled towel, snapped it out and spread it with surprising delicacy over Stella's broken head.

I looked at the sand. Hot, dry sand takes no tracks. The sand spills loosely into any depression. A bare foot makes a depression indistinguishable from that made by a shoe. I searched the water, far out, looking for a head. I looked north along the deserted beach, and south to the headland. The wide beach was empty.

"Where'd she stand?" Matthews asked me.

I stood where Linda had stood. With my towel across Stella's face, I could bear to look at her.

Matthews squatted beside the cartridge case which had been ejected after Linda had shot Stella. He regarded it somberly, sighed and stood up and spat again.

"I'll go look in the cottages," I said.

"We'll both go."

WE WENT up to the cottages. We went in our cottage first. It was empty. It felt empty. Our footsteps were loud. We looked in the other one. It was just as empty. We went in back and looked at the dock. There was no one there.

"We better get back on the beach before somebody gets the idea of looking under that towel," Matthews said.

I counted 15 people on the beach. Matthews herded them back. He sat tirelessly on his heels, quite near the body.

"I'll walk on down the beach and look," I said.

"You stay right here. The sheriff should be here by now."

Sheriff Vernon was a sick-looking man. He was heavy, short of breath, and his face was sweaty gray. Four men followed him, two of them in the uniform of the county road patrol.

Vernon grunted as he stooped and lifted a corner of the towel. He looked for long seconds and dropped it again. He straightened up, glanced at me and said to Matthews, "Well?"

"This here man is named Paul Cowley. He and his wife was taking their vacation together with the Jeffries in those two cottages Dooley built. He says his wife . . ."

I stopped listening. I looked to the north again, and then to the south. As I looked to the south I saw two small figures in the distance come around the headland, walking toward us, walking side by side, a man and a woman.

"Somebody coming now," Matthews said.

We all looked toward the two figures. They both began to hurry toward us. I recognized Jeff and Linda. Jeff carried a fishing rod. He began to run toward us, outdistancing Linda. I stared at him incredulously. He slowed down as he came up to the group, his face harsh with strain.

"What's happened?" he demanded. "Paul, what's the matter?"

HE SAW her then, beyond us. He dropped the rod and reel into the sand and plunged toward her. He fell to his knees, reached toward the towel, hesitated and then took it off. Linda had reached the group. She screamed. I turned sharply toward her as she screamed and saw the stringer drip to the sand. There were three plump sheepshead on the stringer with their gay wide black and white stripes. They began to flap around in the sand.

"What happened to her?" Jeff asked in a toneless, mechanical voice. "What did that to Stella?"

"She was shot in the head," Vernon said brutally.

He got to his feet. My mouth worked but I could not say anything. I took a step back. Linda made a sick sound in her throat, took a ragged step to the right and crumpled to the sand. Jeff came at me. His hard fist hit under my ear and knocked me sprawling. People were yelling. I was dazed. He fell on me and his hard hands closed on my throat. I grabbed his wrists and tried to pull his hands loose. He was grunting with effort. They pulled him away. I sat up, coughing and massaging my throat. Four men were clinging to Jeff's big arms. He wrenched and plunged, trying to tear free. I coughed and swallowed. My throat felt as though it was full of sand.

Suddenly the fight went out of Jeff. "All right," he said woodenly. "All right, you can let go."

They released him tentatively, ready to grab again, but when he just stood there, they stepped back. "Just what the hell is going on here?" Sheriff Vernon demanded bitterly.

Jeff looked out toward the Gulf, his face dark. "I guess I can tell you," he said. "Cowley has been pestering my wife for the last two weeks. Making a fool of himself. Making clumsy passes. Stella was amused at first. I told him to lay off. He said he would, but as soon as he had a drink he'd start again. We threatened to leave. Linda, Missus Cowley, begged us to stay. He was better yesterday and this morning. I was going to go fishing. Linda wanted to come too. Stella said she'd stay. Cowley borrowed my rifle to do some target



I swam silently in the darkness until my feet struck bottom. Then I crawled the rest of the way to the overturned boat.

shooting, he said. He probably started the same old routine and Stella got annoyed. I felt uneasy leaving the two of them here. I should have come back."

I stared at him. It was like being in a nightmare. They were all looking at me. I am positive that I looked the picture of shame and guilt. My voice was too shrill. "It wasn't that way! It wasn't that way at all! It was you, Linda, running around with Jeff. You shot her, Linda. I saw you shoot her and you shot Jeff too."

He stared at me. "Linda shot her! Linda's been with me for the last hour and a half. She caught two of those three fish. And you say Linda shot me, Cowley? Where? Show me where I'm shot."

Linda came up to me. She put her hands on my forearm. Her fingers were cold. She looked into my eyes. Her mouth was sad. I thought I could see little glints of triumph and amusement deep in her eyes. She looked sedate, respectable, in her severe swim suit. "Please, darling," she said. "You don't know what you're saying."

I hit her across her lying mouth, splitting her lip and knocking her down. They jumped me. They roughed me up and handcuffed me to a man in uniform. They hustled me up to the car. They put me in the back seat of one of the official cars and they drove me away from there.

Bosworth, the county seat of Semulla County, was 18 miles farther south. I was officially charged with suspicion of murder, photographed and fingerprinted. I was still, incongruously, in swimming trunks, barefooted. There were no pocket items to be surrendered. They gave me a pair of gray twill coveralls much too large for me.

They walked me down a long hall with a cold tile floor, and took me into a small room with a big table, five chairs and two barred windows. They pushed me into a chair.

They left a fat young man with a red face with me. He wore gray pants, a white mesh sports shirt and a black pistol belt. He sat on the table, swinging his legs.

Now I saw how all the parts went together. Nothing

had made sense until the final act, and then it was all clear. I could enumerate all the little pieces which blended so carefully. Obviously, after we had got to know the Jeffries, Linda had met him clandestinely. This was her big chance. After she had heard the Carbonellis' description of Verano Key, of how deserted it was out of season, she had decided on it as the perfect scene for the crime to be.

All the parts fitted. His coaching her in the use of the rifle; her aim had to be good to miss him convincingly. She knew I wouldn't go and examine him. She remembered the dead cat I wouldn't touch.

Even the live fish. Sheepshead are durable. They will live overnight on a stringer in the water. Jeff had gone fishing, alone, yesterday on the bay side. Obviously he had caught three fish, fastened his stringer to a low mangrove branch, hidden the rod and reel, and sauntered back. Three live fish—that was a touch of art, nearly of genius.

They had known I would take the rifle away from her. It had been easy to anticipate what the Cowley fool would do. As soon as the car went down the road they would hurry down the beach and cross over to the bay side where Jeff had concealed the fish and equipment. Perhaps then he came, unseen, to a place where he could watch the beach so that their timing would be perfect—as perfect as it was. His attack on me had been planned, and wholeheartedly murderous. It was a release for his tension, and a chance to look good in the eyes of the law, so he had been enthusiastic.

There was no point in thinking about it.

At three they came trooping solemnly in, Vernon, a pimply female stenographer, a tall white-haired man who looked like a political poster, and a young man in a pink sports shirt with tanned, powerful forearms, a face like a block of carved wood, and alert eyes.

They took chairs and Vernon said, "Cowley, this is Mister Carl Shepp, the county prosecutor, and his assistant Mister David Hill." Vernon opened a folder in front of him and said, "Now, we got to ask you some

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questions for the record. Anything you say may be used in evidence against you."

"May I have an attorney present, please?"

"That's your right," he said reluctantly.

His name was Calvin Journeyman, and he came into the room at a full lop. The other men wore sports shirts in concession to the thick heat. Journeyman wore a rusty black suit and a pale yellow bow tie. The suit did not fit him well. Perhaps no suit could have fit him well. He had a small torso and great, long, spidery arms and legs. He had black hair combed straight back, a knobby red face, and at least a full inch of sloping forehead. His eyes were the milky blue of skim milk. They flicked from face to face and came to rest on me.

"Don't let 'em lean on you, Paul," he said. "Whyn't you folks clear out in the hall a minute and let me talk to my client?"

"I'm willing to answer anything they want to ask without any previous instructions," I said.

"Go rassle another chair in here, Roose," he said to the guard. He frowned at me. "I don't like anybody to start off not taking legal advice. Anyway, we've got nothing to hide, like you say, so let it roll, Vern."

The chair was brought and he leaned back, lean fists under his chin, eyes busy. First they had me tell the story in my own words. Then Vernon took me back over it, point by point.

The questions went on and on. And at last they ended. Vernon looked at me. He looked at the stenographer. "Don't take this down, honey. Cowley, you look bright enough. Just how in the hell do you expect to sell intelligent people a yarn like you dreamed up? I was there. I saw Jeffries' reaction. I saw your wife's re-



Dave Hill played the phony recording, but Linda didn't fall for it. She was like a shrewd animal fighting for its life.

action. I saw the way you looked. I know the way you acted when you went into the market there at Hooker. I've talked to your wife. She's a fine girl and you've broken her heart. I talked to Jeffries. He's just plain stunned by what you did. And you can still sit there and lie to us the way you do and keep a straight face. It isn't even a good lie. God help you."

They moved me to a cell. It was surprisingly large and clean, with heavy steel casement windows, a bed and chair bolted to the floor, a sink and toilet, and a steel shelf for personal possessions.

That night it was a long time before I could get to sleep.

After the morning meal I was told that Linda had come to visit me and had brought some things for me. My first impulse was to tell them to have her leave the things and go. But I was curious about her, about how she would carry it off.

She came with clothing over her arm, with cigarettes and magazines and the portable radio. She wore a plain dark dress and very little make-up. The jailer was very courtly with her.

I sat on the bed and watched her. "Dear, they told me you could have clothes, but no belt or shoelaces, so I brought the slacks that don't need a belt, and your moccasins. Here's the socks and underwear. I'll just put them right here on this shelf. I guess the cigarettes and magazines can go here too." She put the clothing on the bed beside me and sat down in the single chair, smiled briefly at me and dug into her purse for her own cigarettes.

"Doesn't it mean anything to you, Linda? Didn't it change something inside of you, pulling that trigger and seeing what it did to her?"

She closed her eyes for a portion of a second. "Don't be irrational, darling," she said calmly.

"How long have you looked for the big chance? How many years? What made you think this was it? You're a damn fool, Linda. Even if it works, it won't really work, you know. He knows what you did. And that means he knows what you are. Maybe you can hold him for a little while, but the years are hardening and coarsening you, Linda. And your looks are the only thing to hold him with. You haven't got anything else. You did the actual deed, not him. He'll think about that more and more as time goes by. I suppose you plan to marry him. Maybe, right now, he's thinking how foolish that would be. It wouldn't give him anything he hasn't already had. It would be a nice joke on you, Linda. You set him free, and he leaves you flat. You wouldn't dare object. You wouldn't dare open your mouth."

She stood up abruptly. Her face was a mask. I saw that I had touched her. I saw the effort it took for her to relax again. Then she smiled. "Dear, you must get that fantasy out of your head. Poor Jeff. This tragedy has made him quite dependent on me." She gave a subtle emphasis to the word "dependent."

"You better go, Linda."

She wouldn't call the jailer. I yelled for him. He came and let her out. She turned in the open door and said, for his benefit, "Please try to get some sleep, darling. You'll feel so much better if you get some sleep."

I cursed her quietly and the jailer looked at me with pained indignation and slammed the cell door with clangs of emphasis. When they were gone I undressed, washed at the sink, put on the fresh clothing.

It felt good to have shoes on again. cell or no cell. They took me to an office in the afternoon and gave me a written and oral test that lasted over two hours. A half-hour after I was back in the cell, Journeyman came in. He looked bitter. "You're sane, all right. Know what you've got? A very stable personality and good intelligence."

"What makes you so happy?" I asked him.

"All your prints they found on the gun. Plus some of Jeffries' and some of your wife's. But mostly yours. And Jeffries showed Vern where he and your wife caught the fish. Vern picked up four of her cigarette butts there, on the bank, with her lipstick on them. They fished in a hole near an old broken-down dock behind a mangrove point, so they weren't seen by any of the boat traffic on the bay. It comes down to this, Paul. It's your word against theirs. And a jury will believe them."

He said he would come back the next day and go over a lot of stuff in detail, and then he left.

David Hill arrived at eight o'clock. He looked through the bars at me and said, "I'm the opposition, so you don't have to talk to me, Cowley."

"I don't mind," I said.

HE SAT in the straight chair, thumbed his pipe, and got it going again. "Ever play chess, Cowley?"

"No."

"When your opponent launches an attack, you must watch the moves he makes and try to figure out what he has in mind. The most nonsensical-looking moves can sometimes conceal a very strong attack."

"I'm afraid I don't follow."

"We paid per diem to two men who confirmed what I'd already guessed. You're intelligent, stable. I spent some more county funds today and talked to a man named Rufus Stick. I have a fair idea of what you're like, Cowley. You are my opponent, let's say, and I see you making a nonsensical move. In other words, your story of what happened on the beach. You stand up to stiff questioning, and they don't trip you once. So I have two assumptions. One, you made up that story and went over it in your mind until you were letter perfect on it. Two, it was the truth. Now, why would an opponent I know to be able, devise a story which practically means suicide? Answer: He wouldn't. Conclusion: He told the truth. Next step, a closer look at the two other principles. How did you meet your wife, Cowley?"

I told him everything I could remember about her, and everything I knew about Brandan Jeffries. From time to time he wrote things down in a small notebook. It took a long time.

When at last he stood up to go I said, "It is the truth, you know."

He looked into his dead pipe. "I think it is, Cowley. I'll wire Jeffries to be back for the inquest. He was told his statement would be enough. I'll get him back here."

"What will you do?"

"I don't know yet." He looked at me and his face changed. "If your story is true, it's the coldest, most brutal, most callous murder I've ever heard of."

Journeyman was in the next day and we worked for three hours. Linda came the next day with more cigarettes and reading matter. I refused to see her and the jailer sullenly brought me the things she had brought.

David Hill, complete with pipe, came at noon on

Monday. He seemed ill at ease, as though he had to bring up something unpleasant. When he finally brought it up, it was not as unpleasant as it would have seemed a week before. It was about Linda.

"Her name was still Willestone when she went out to Los Angeles," he said. "She went out there with a married man. He left her. She was calling herself Mrs. Brady when you met her again. Mrs. Julius Brady, you said. There is no marriage record. She lived in San Bernardino with a petty gambler named Julius Brady for a while. He cheated some soldiers at Camp Anza and was sent up. There's a blank, and then she turned up in Bakersfield, calling herself Linda Brady. She was sentenced twice there, thirty-day terms, for soliciting. She moved up to Los Angeles and was picked up in the company of a man wanted on suspicion of armed robbery. They found out she was sick and committed her to the county hospital until she was well. Then she was warned to leave the city. That was about three months before you met her on the street. It isn't very pretty, Cowley."

I thought of how she had been, years ago. "In school," I said softly. "she was the prettiest, and the best. Life was going to give her all the wonderful things. You could see that, just looking at her."

"Maybe she thought so too," Hill said. "Life didn't give them to her and she tried to take them, and her methods were wrong, and she got licked, beaten down. Then you picked her up and brushed her off. This time she waited for the big chance."

"How about Jeffries?"

"Nothing on him. Orphaned. Brought up by an aunt. Never much money. Good athlete. He was working on a cruise ship, something to do with games and recreation, when he met his wife. She steered him into sales, and he did well. Her people objected at first, but finally came around. He'll be back tonight. He's flying in. I've wangled a delay on the inquest."

"Why? What can you do?"

"Sometimes you see an attack shaping up. It's flawless. If you make all the expected moves, you're going to be slowly and inevitably defeated. So you don't make the expected moves. You make a wild move. It's meaningless. But they don't know positively that it's meaningless. So they have to guard against the unknown. Sometimes it can put a strong attack off balance, just enough."

After he left I thought about what he had said. They had the plot and the plan and the program. They were the ones, Linda and Jeff, who had moved. I was the one who was being whirled down the careful channel they had dug to the inevitable destination they had planned for me. What did they expect me to do? Obviously, I was expected to sit in this cell and insist that my story was the true one, and so instruct my lawyer, and wait calmly for a trial that would end me.

I WONDERED how I could deviate from the pattern. The most obviously unexpected thing was to escape.

I knew that my cell was on the top floor. There were two cells to the left of the guardroom, of which this was one. The other was empty. Beyond the guardroom, on the other end of the corridor, were a "drunk tank" and a row of smaller cells. There were three stories and a basement. No elevators. To reach the stairs it would be necessary to go through the guardroom. I had no idea of who might be in there, or even if there was always

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somebody there. My radio was plugged in. I turned it up higher and examined the windows. They would open only so far, not far enough to squeeze through, even if I could cut the heavy screening. It had to be through the door.

In spite of the massive look of the door, the lock didn't seem impressive. The jailer used two keys to open the door. One unlocked a flap arrangement which covered the second keyhole, thus preventing the prisoner from reaching through the bars and trying to pick the main lock. When he closed the cell door, the main lock snapped into place, and then he used his key just for the outer flap arrangement. The door fitted closely, but in the small crack I could see the brass gleam of the metal that engaged the slot in the steel frame.

It wasn't until an hour after darkness that I had the vague stirring of an idea of how to cheat the lock.

At breakfast on Tuesday I was able to get a better look at the mechanism. During the morning, by sliding a piece of paper down the crack, I got an accurate idea of the dimensions of the orifice in the steel frame. Later in the afternoon, I took the back off the portable radio. I had to use one prong of the plug as a screwdriver. It wouldn't fit the screw heads until I had rubbed it to a smaller dimension on the rough wall. I disabled the radio, taking out what I decided I needed—one short length of tough wire and a longer length of flexible wire. To break the tough wire to the length I wanted, I had to hold it in my teeth and wind it around and around until it snapped. I bent the short length into a U with square corners, the approximate size of the lock orifice. I knew the bolt was loose in the orifice by the way it chattered when the jailer tested the door each time. It took a long time to fasten the longer, more flexible wire to the small piece. I had removed a small, thin plate from the interior of the radio and replaced the back.

During the afternoon I opened the back of the toilet, removed the rubber valve stop and gouged a small piece off it. I heated it with my matches, and when it bubbled and was sticky, I smeared it liberally on the small, U-shaped piece of wire. An hour later it was still satisfactorily sticky to the touch. I managed with great difficulty to separate a six-inch piece of the rubber plug-in cord of the radio and peel back the insulation on both ends.

I WAS ready then, but I still had to wait a while. My uncommunicative jailer would visit me for the last time when he came to take away the dinner plate and spoon. Usually I passed them between the bars after, at his orders, scraping what I didn't eat into the toilet.

I left the moment of decision until the very last moment. I even reached for the plate and spoon and then slumped back on the bed. He yelled at me in irritation and then came in. I moved slowly toward the cell door. My right hand was in front of me. I slipped the U-shaped bit of wire into the orifice and pressed it in tightly just as he yelled at me. I turned back and he told me to stay away from the door. I was certain he would see the length of flexible wire that hung down from the U-shaped piece. But he was too angry to be observant.

He clashed the door shut, mumbling. He went away and I let out a deep breath. After the guardroom door closed, I fished the hanging piece of wire out with a

scrap of paper. When I held it in my hand, I had in effect a line fastened to a hook, with the hook firmly around the bolt. I held the thin plate in my left hand, the wire in my right. I exerted a steady pressure. The bolt slid easily back. I slipped the plate in quickly. The wire pulled free. The bolt spring held the plate in place. The door was unlocked. I stretched out. If any visitor had come, I would have had to snatch the plate out. The bolt would have clicked into place, and I would have had it to do over again. But no one came. I waited until midnight. By pressing my cheek against the bars I could see the strip of light under the guardroom door. I had heard no rumble of conversation in a long time. The odds were that only one man was in the room.

I took the six-inch piece of insulated wire and shorted out the wall plug. I ran to the door and looked again. The strip of light was gone. I opened the cell door, catching the plate before it could fall. I closed the cell door and the lock clicked into place.

I hurried silently up the dark hall. The guardroom door opened inward onto the corridor, I remembered. I flattened myself against the wall beside the door.

THE door opened suddenly, swinging back and snubbing against the toe of my moccasin. The night jailer walked grumbling along the corridor, shielding a match flame. Ten feet beyond me the match went out. I went through the room cautiously, found the knob and opened the door to the main corridor. There was a light at the far end. The staircase was shadowy. I went down as quietly as I could. I found an unlocked door and went in. Streetlight outside illuminated the orderly rows of desks and cabinets. I slid one of the big windows open. It made a great deal of noise. It was a six-foot drop into shrubbery. I landed and hit my chin on my knee, biting my lip until it bled. I ran across the midnight expanse of the courthouse lawn, keeping in the shadow. I thought I could hear hoarse yelling behind me. I stopped, oriented myself, and turned north.

At the north edge of town I came upon a rustic bar set back from the road. Local cars were thick around it. I found a pickup truck. I crawled cautiously into the back, found a tarp and pulled it over me. The tarp smelled of ancient fish.

It was at least a half-hour before people got into the truck. Two young boys, I judged. They backed out briskly. I held my breath. They turned north. The road was smooth and they drove fast. I tried to make an estimate of the miles. Suddenly the truck began to slow down. I risked looking. The truck was slowing down to turn into a driveway out in the country. A single light was on in a house set back under the pines. I thrust the tarp aside and, as the truck made the turn, I vaulted out into the wide, shallow ditch and fell headlong. I rolled onto my back and looked at the stars. A truck rumbled by. When I looked again, the house light was out. I got up and began to walk north. I walked spiritlessly, forcing myself. Perhaps I had assumed that I would be like men I had read about, tireless because of their anger and desperation. But I wanted to lie down in the ditch, or flag a car headed south. My feet hurt and I felt cross and tired. But I stubbornly plodded along through the night, feeling dulled and purposeless. Far back of me I heard the thin, lost whine of a siren, coming closer. I walked as before, telling myself I didn't give a damn.

Then unexpected fear made me come alive. I plunged across the ditch and tripped and fell flat. I rolled into deeper shelter. The siren, on a high sustained note, screamed by and faded into the north.

I had no watch. I guessed it would be nearly four when I reached the turnoff to Verano Key. My eyes had adjusted to the night. I walked a half-mile down the sand road to the old wooden bridge. I stopped and listened. I could hear no far-off sound of a car. I didn't want to be caught on the bridge so I ran across and turned into coarse grass and crouched on one knee, listening again.

I trudged down the Key road. From time to time I would see the Gulf, inky under the sky, with a starlit paleness where small waves broke on the sand. I had no idea what to do once I arrived at the cottage.

I saw headlights ahead of me, rounding a bend in the sand road. I ran up over the sand bank to my right and stretched out. The car lurched by. It had a noisy motor, and I heard gears clattering on metal. I went back up onto the road. Finally I knew I was close. I rounded the last bend and I could see the two cottages. There were lights on in the near one, the Jeffries cottage. I stood for a moment, then turned abruptly to the left, forcing my way through the heavy growth. The footing was bad; at places it was so thick I couldn't force my way through, and I had to detour. I moved as quietly as I could. I worked my way with difficulty over the tangle of mangrove roots near the water line. The bay stretched black in front of me, stars quivering on the surface of it. I stepped slowly into the warm water, moved out until I was five or six feet from the overgrown shore line. My shoes sank deeply into the mud with each step.

After about 200 feet of cautious progress I saw the cottage lights on the water, making the dock visible to me. I stopped in the shadows and wondered how I could get closer. The far side of the dock was in darkness. I waded slowly out until the water was up to my chest. I lowered myself into it and swam with a noiseless side stroke, rounding the far end of the dock. I came in, in the darkness, until my knee struck bottom. I crawled, dripping, keeping below the level of the dock. I reached the overturned boat, lay beside it on my back, got my arms braced and tilted it up. I eased under it and let it down slowly. The upcurve of the bow rested against the ground, so that there were two or three inches of free space on either side of me.

As I had worked at the boat, I had heard voices. Now I stretched out, waited until my breathing quieted, and then tried to listen. I could make out the timbre of Linda's voice, but no word that she said. There were two men. I knew I couldn't risk trying to get closer.

SUDDENLY I heard the brisk slap of a screen door and realized they had been talking on the front porch of the Jeffries cottage. I recognized the voice of the man called Dike Matthews as he said, raising his voice a bit, "Like I said, there's no need to get the jitters about it. He hasn't got a gun, and you look like you could handle him, Mister Jeffries. Also, I don't figure he'd head for here. What would be the point? Unless he's nuts like some folks think, in spite of what those fancy doctors said. I suspect you can go on back to sleep and not give it another thought. We got the state boys cooperating and road blocks out, and by first light they ought to pick him up."

"You'll let us know," Linda said. I realized she had moved out into the yard too. There was tension in her voice.

"Sure. We'll let you know."

A STARTER whined and the car motor caught and roared. The headlights swept across the boat as he backed out. I heard the car go on down the sand road. I listened for the sound of the screen door again to indicate they had gone back in. Linda said something I couldn't catch.

"I just don't like it, that's all," Jeff said. "I don't like any part of it." His voice was pitched higher than usual. It was querulous. "As far as I'm concerned, I'd like to get in the car and go find a motel where—"

"Come here," she said. I heard the scuff of their feet on the grass as they came toward the overturned boat. They walked by the boat in silence. I heard the sound of their steps on the wooden boards of the dock. At the same time I heard the distant rumble as Matthews, on his way back, drove over the loose boards of the bridge a mile away.

They stopped so close to me that I could hear Jeff sigh. I worked my way close to the edge of the boat and got my eye to the crack. They sat side by side on the dock, their legs hanging over the water. She was wearing her bulky white beach robe.

"Tomorrow," she said in a low tone, "you're going to move to Bosworth. It wasn't smart to move back into that cottage. I'll stay here. We were stupid to give anybody the chance to make any guesses about us."

"He didn't suspect anything. Why don't we go up to the house? It's too buggy out here."

"We don't go up to the house because I want to talk to you. I had to be away from the cottage several times. One of them, the young one named Hill, keeps starting the wrong kind of conversation. I don't like the way he looks at me. And I'm playing this safe, Jeff. Terribly safe. He could have put something in the cottage, either cottage, so he could record what we said. That's all right so long as we stick to our agreement always to talk about it as if Paul did it, but not now, not this way."

"That Matthews didn't suspect anything," Jeff said sullenly.

"And if he didn't, whose fault was that? I'm the one who heard him drive in. I'm the one who had to make the mad dash across the yard while you answered the door. You move into town tomorrow."

"All right, all right. But I don't like all this. Why did he break out?"

"You kept telling me you had good nerves. Sure. Nothing could rattle you. Just plan it all out and then sit tight. No loose ends."

"But—"

"But nothing. What could go wrong? Use your thick head. We even thought of putting cigarette butts down there with my lipstick on them to prove that I spent time there with you. There was no one on the beach and no one out in a boat who could possibly have seen what happened."

There was a long silence. I heard a cigarette butt hiss as it was flipped into the water. "I didn't know it would be the way it was," Jeff said. "I guess I thought she'd just look as if she were asleep. But her eyes, and all that blood . . ."

I sensed the effort behind her calm voice. "Jeff, darling, I'm sorry. I just don't want you to think about

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that. I have to think about it too, you know."

"Yes, you really have to think about it, don't you?"

"Now, don't start that. From the point of view of the law, my friend, it was our finger on that trigger, not just mine. Ours. Please, Jeff. Try to take it easy. Nothing can happen to us. We planned it too carefully. All we have to do is wait and act sad and cooperate with them. When it's all over, we'll wait a reasonable period of time and then we can be together."

"On her money."

"It's done and we have to do what we said we'd do and then we'll be safe."

"And all we have to do is live with it."

"You make me so sick sometimes. Good night, Jeff."

I heard him get up. "You better come and get your clothes," he said.

"I'll get them in the morning," she said tonelessly.

The lights in Jeff's cottage went out. I heard her walk by the boat. I could have reached out and caught her ankle and brought her down to where I could reach her throat. I could think of that, yet I couldn't do it. She was safe in the black night.

I lifted the boat, wiggled out, and walked boldly between the two sleeping cottages out to the sand road. The big car sat heavy in the dawn light, windows misted. I looked down at the beach where Stella had died. I walked north to the bridge and crossed it. I decided to turn toward Hooker. I could cut across country behind the town and head on north.

I was 50 feet beyond the bridge when the harsh voice behind me said, "Cowley!"

They took me back.

I was sleeping heavily when David Hill arrived. When I awakened he was in the cell, smoking quietly, watching me. He took the pipe out of his mouth, grinned, and said, "I was the one who was going to make an unexpected move, not you."

"It didn't do any good," I said. It was the first time I had spoken since my capture.

"What did you do?"

I told him. I told him how I had gimmicked the lock, how I had gotten out, about the ride in the truck, the long walk, hiding under the boat. I told him, as nearly as I could remember, what had been said. I told him how they had grabbed me near the bridge.

He looked at me for a long time, the pipe motionless in his hand, two deep wrinkles between his eyebrows. "Told anybody else about this?" he asked.

"No."

HE GOT up and paced back and forth. From time to time he would stop, look at nothing, then pace again.

"It's worth a try, anyway," he said.

"What's worth a try?"

"That you took a tape recorder with you. But first I have to do one hell of a sales job on Vernon and Shepp."

It took him over an hour. He came back with paper, a clip board, pencils. He pretended to snap sweat off his brow. "A sales job indeed," he said. "Here. Start writing. I want the script of that talk. Every damn word you can remember."

I looked at the paper. I put down an "L" to indicate Linda, put a dash after it and wrote, "Tomorrow you're going to move to Bosworth. It wasn't smart to move back here." I looked at Hill. I said, "I don't know if

that was the exact wording or not."

"Is it the way she could have said it? Is it in character?"

"Yes, but—"

"What makes you think their memories will be better than yours? Write what they said. Keep it as close as you can."

It was dusk when Hill and a guard came and got me and took me down to the small room where they had first interviewed me. He read over what I had written. He had me wait there with the guard. He was gone over an hour. When he came back he had four typed copies of what I had written. He had four people with him, two young girls and two men. He didn't introduce them. He merely said, "Paul, these people are professionals. I got them down here from Sarasota. I've briefed them a little. I want you to check the voices, pick the two closest to Linda and Jeff."

I DO NOT know how many times they went over it. I could tell that some parts were surprisingly right, and others weren't so good.

Finally, I was as satisfied as I could get, even though I knew that those two didn't actually sound anything like Linda and Jeff.

It was then that Hill brought in the machine. It was an ordinary dictation machine, of a kind seen in many offices. He had them do a portion of it and then he played it back. He said, "We'll have to take it farther from the mike, kids. You come through too clearly. Let me erase what we've got, and then we'll try it about here."

He made a second test, erased, and let them go all the way through it. It shocked me when he played it back. They could have been Linda and Jeff. Some parts were so vividly real that my neck tingled.

It was ten in the morning when they took me down to a big office I hadn't seen before. Hill sat behind a big desk. His smile was quick and nervous. Sheriff Vernon stood by the windows, pouchy and ill-humored. The pimply girl sat off to the side with her steno pad. Mr. Shepp sat alone in critical dignity. They put me in a chair in the corner.

"What do you want him here for while this damn fool stunt goes on?" Vernon demanded.

"The psychological effect, I guess. Tell your guard to wait in the corridor. I want Cowley to look as if he had been freed."

Vernon sniffed, turned his broad back to the room and looked out the window, disassociating himself from such nonsense. I sat uncomfortably. My moccasins had dried stiff and hard, and they pinched my insteps. My slacks were stiff with dried salt. I heard the distinctive click-tap, click-tap of Linda's high heels and heard her voice on a rising, questioning inflection as she spoke to someone. A tall, sallow man in uniform opened the door for her and she came in. She came three steps into the room and I watched her, saw her quick eyes flick around and pass across me. She wore a white blouse, fluffy and intricate, setting off her dark tan. She wore a brick red coarse weave skirt and a belt with a big silver Mexican buckle. She wore lizard shoes with four-inch heels, and I remembered that those shoes had cost \$29. She carried an oblong straw purse that looked like a doll coffin.

"Did you want to talk to me?" She addressed the question to the room at large.

"Please sit down right here, Missus Cowley," Hill said. She sat down in her neat way and crossed her excellent legs, lizard toe pointing toward the floor, dark eyebrows delicately raised in question.

"Missus Cowley," Hill said, "just as an experiment, and I might say contrary to the wishes of my superiors, I took the liberty of having recording equipment installed on the Dooley property."

Her face did not change. I watched her hands. She held the wide straw strap of the purse. She began to scuff at the strap with her pointed thumbnail. It made a faint mouse-sound in the still room. "Yes?" Eyebrows still delicately raised.

"Mister Cowley said that you were shrewd enough to be on guard while in either of the cottages. While you were away to pick up Mister Jeffries on his return, I looked over the property and decided to have the installation made in that overturned boat near the bay dock."

"I'm afraid I don't understand all this," Linda said politely. But her thumb was digging harder at the straw. She had parted some of the small strands.

"I'd like to play back some of the results," he said. He turned and fiddled with the equipment beside him, below the desk level, out of sight. The room was very quiet.

The equipment hissed and hummed and then came the ghost voice of Jeff, crackling, disembodied, saying sarcastically, "Yes, you really have to think about it, don't you?"

"Now, don't start that. From the point of view of the law, my friend, it was our finger on the trigger, not just mine. Ours. Please, Jeff. Try to take it easy. Nothing can happen to us. We planned it too careful. And don't fret about Paul. He hasn't got the guts of a rabbit."

Hill turned off the machine. Linda sat very still, her head tilted to one side, her thumbnail deep in the soft strap, the cords of her throat thick. She looked as if she was still listening to the voice. She was good. She was a shrewd animal fighting for its life. She leaned back in the chair and she laughed.

It was a good laugh and it took the life out of Dave Hill's deep-set eyes. "But, Mister Hill, I don't understand what this is all about. Was that supposed to be me talking to Mister Jeffries?"

"All right, Jenneau," Hill said to the guard. "Take her to Room Twelve and leave her with Missus Carty, and bring Jeffries in here."

She had gotten up as Hill started to speak to the man in uniform. Her color was good. When Hill said to bring Jeffries in, I saw her eyes change and knew that in that moment she knew exactly what would happen.

THE area around her mouth turned gray and bloodless under her tan. Her smile as she turned toward Shepp was grotesque.

"I think we've had quite enough of this nonsense," she said. "I don't see why Mister Jeffries should be subjected to this sort of farce."

"I agree wholeheartedly," Shepp said in his bassoon voice. "We've had enough of this embarrassing farce, Hill. I've never had the slightest doubt in my mind but what—"

"Hold it!" Vernon said. He stood there, looking at Linda. The eyes in his fat, sweaty, sick-looking face were shrewd. He looked at Linda for a few more seconds. He nodded, as though deciding something

within himself. "Do just like Hill told you, Jenneau."

Shepp stood up. "But I insist that—"

"Sit down and shut up!" Vernon said, never taking his eyes from Linda's face. She turned violently away and they left the room.

Hill said softly, "Thanks."

It was a long two minutes before Jeff came in. Big, rugged, hearty Jeff. Gray sports shirt with green fish on it. Material taut over the shoulders. Spiky brushcut, and engaging grin.

Hill gave him exactly the same build-up he had given Linda. I had the curious impression that, as Hill spoke, Jeff was dwindling before my eyes, shrinking down into himself. The recording was, of course, exactly the same as before. The rasping ghost voices.

JEFF didn't break the long silence that followed the recording.

Hill said, in a kindly tone, "We have all of it. The entire conversation. Would you like to hear all of it?"

Jeff didn't answer. I couldn't see his expression. I saw the big chest lift and fall with the slow cadence of his breathing. I realized that he was frozen there with terror and regret, and some animal caution told him that the only thing he could do would be to say nothing.

"Missus Cowley has told us that it was your plan from the beginning."

I expected several things. A heated denial. A wild attempt at escape. I didn't expect what he did. He put his big hands up and held them, palms flat, against his face. He bent forward from the waist. The sobs were almost vocalized. "Ah-huh, ah-huh, ah-huh—" the phrasing and emphasis of a small child that cries. Small, grown-up child, lost and alone.

No one spoke. Jeff slowly regained control. He snuffled, wiped his nose on the back of his hand. He sat with his elbows on spread knees, forehead resting on his fists as though he couldn't bear to look at anyone.

"It wasn't my plan," he said, his breath catching from time to time. Hill nodded at the girl. She began to take notes. "It started out as a joke. But it grew. We talked about ways it could happen. Where it should happen. We had a lot of bad ideas. Then we had this one. It's funny. Right up until . . . right up until the last second, I was thinking about it like it was a plan that wasn't really real. That wouldn't really happen. Then she did it. She shot Stella in the head and that made it real and we had to go through with it."

He looked at Hill then. He said carefully, explaining it, "Once the shot was fired, you couldn't take it back. You couldn't change anything."

"No," Hill said gently, "you couldn't."

At the trial they seemed like strangers. They didn't look at me when I testified. I went back north after the trial. I worked in my shop in the cellar all through the night before the early morning when they were executed. I looked at the electric clock she had bought. It was pottery, shaped like a plate. It was twenty past the hour and I knew it was over. I felt as though I should do something dramatic, decisive, final. There must be some great gesture I could perform, if I could only think of what it was.

In the end, all I did was take a shower, shave and drive to the office. I was early. When Rufus came in, he told me I could take a day or a week off if I felt like it.

I told him I felt all right.

★ THE END

Strange Rendezvous

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waited for it almost a day. It didn't show up. I imagine your Navy got it." His wide shoulders sagged. "Of course, you'll win in the end."

After a moment, he went on. "My crew has had no cigarettes for several days. That's bad on a cramped submarine."

He turned and looked out the window. "I could easily blow you out of the water. But I really should find better targets. I only have a few torpedoes left and it appears I won't get any more. Of course, I could sink all of you with a few rounds from my cannon."

He turned and looked down at me, studying me as if he were estimating his strategic position. I knew my life and the lives of the crews on three LCIs waited on his decision.

I analyzed our possibilities. Sure, we could kill him. Then his sub would just back off and fire away.

"Could I possibly trust you to sail on to Bora Bora without sending your Navy a position report on my submarine?" Before I could answer, he put down his glass. "Come with me. I want you to see my submarine."

As we stepped off the gangplank onto his sub, he said, "We are monitoring your radio transmitters at this very moment. Of course, I'll destroy you if you send a position report—now or later. Shall we agree not to send position reports to either of our navies?"

My crew watched curiously as I shook hands with the commander and called up to my signalman in the tower. "Don't send any radio reports. Blinker the order to the other LCIs."

It would mean salvation if the commander kept the bargain. But it could be a ruse to keep us quiet until the sub sank us with its cannon before we could send out a beep.

The tour of the magnificent submarine, with its turbine built in Detroit, U.S.A., ended in the commander's ward room.

"There is only time for one cup of coffee, I'm afraid." He spoke in clipped tones. "I must see the big turtles soon."

"The big turtles" meant the Galapagos Islands.

I felt the growing urgency in him. As I drank the coffee, he carefully and ceremoniously wrapped two bottles of sake. He hurriedly jotted something on note paper and handed it to me.

"This is the address of my father and mother in San Francisco," he said. "Will you visit them for me after the war? Tell them how we met. I know I will never see them again." He smiled. "The sake is for you."

In the lengthening silence I knew that our meeting in the Pacific Ocean had ended. I thanked him and shook hands. "Good luck," I said, and moved quickly out to the deserted sub deck.

I crossed the gangplank and looked back. No life stirred on the huge sub. "Cast off lines," I called.

We were loose and drifting. The sun turned into a flaming mass. Its rays bore down on the metal deck and heat waves began rising along my legs. The strange coolness left the air.

The commander appeared in his conn tower and looked across at us.

I called up to my tower. "Activate engines."

Blue clouds of smoke curled out of our stack. The sub was now 15 yards off our starboard, hissing and gurgling as her engines came to life. If the commander planned treachery, now was

his chance. He wouldn't have another. Just then the sub's deck hatches popped open and the crew tumbled out on deck.

"We've had it," the gunnery officer said. "He'll knock down our antennae first."

The Japs fell into line, spotless in their white uniforms. At a shout from their commander, they saluted us, broke ranks and ran to the edge of the sub deck to wave!

My crew stood petrified for seconds, then fanned out along the rail, shouting and waving back like a bunch of madmen.

The commander raised his hand and called a goodbye through his electric megaphone. There was a dismal ring to it. He was off on his last sweep which would end, he knew, in death.

The sub deck emptied and the great craft pulled away under full draft.

I heard a radio signal and I headed for the tower on the run. "Were you sending?" I snapped at the signalman.

"Not a dot, sir," he answered.

The faces of the others in the tower showed nothing. I looked out at the sub and saw that it was still on course. I signaled the engineer room and the deck began to vibrate.

"Blinker all ships to proceed," I said. I leaned down over the rail and called, "Tell Cookie to open up the galley!"

Some of the crew were still at the

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rail, watching the sub. The others were going down to the galley and coming topside with coffee and pastries and shouting a million questions up at me.

I shrugged. "Like the man said," I called down, "they wanted a cigarette. You ever want a cigarette bad?"

"Think he was kidding you, Skipper?" the exec asked.

"Look for yourself," I said, pointing at the departing sub.

Ten minutes later, we were using binoculars to track the sub. She was on the surface, making 20 knots toward the Galapagos. Apparently, the commander was keeping his word and expected me to keep mine. At that distance, the slender sub looked less huge, much more vulnerable to attack. I wondered about the radio signal I thought I had heard.

I went below again and hit the sack, shaken and exhausted to the bone. I tried to close my eyes, but the lids wouldn't obey.

Should I have let the gunnery officer use his 20 mms to spray the hell out of the sub crew?

Could I forget the American ships toward which his sub was moving? Should I keep my promise not to radio his position to the Navy?

Irish wandered past the door playing a strange tune on his harmonica. He stuck his head in.

"New tune," he beamed. "One of the Japs tried to teach it to me." He shrugged. "I got to learn something besides 'When Irish Eyes Are Smiling,' don't I?"

"It would help a lot," I said.

I got up and walked down the passageway with Irish to the deck. Climbing to the tower, I focused my binoculars on the spot where the sub had

gone over the edge and disappeared.

A small pinpoint of black cloud sat lightly on the edge of the horizon. As it slowly expanded, a hollow "thump" came across the water like a muffled echo. The exec and signalman looked up, and a feeling of complete emptiness came over me. The smoke cloud thinned and was gone. I heard a faint droning.

A gooney bird, the Navy PB2Y sub killer, lumbered through the air from the distant horizon. A light blinked from its fat, blue belly.

The signalman copied the code and handed it to me. It read, "Lucky."

We knew the sub had been sunk. I wondered what the commander had been thinking as his plating ripped apart and he sank into the Pacific. Had he thought I had betrayed him? I hoped not.

The signalman stood at the rail beside me. "Skipper, I checked with the other ships while you were below. No message left our formation about the sub's position." His voice sounded lighter as he added, "Remember, we passed a couple of ships last night. Maybe . . ."

It was near sundown when I called the trailing LCIs into close, flanking formation so I could explain the curious events we had witnessed from a distance.

"Well, today we met the enemy," I called over the megaphone. "They ran out of cigarettes and the commander didn't want them to get nicotine fits. So he stopped us to pick up a case."

Static scratched from the megaphone, then cleared.

"Now, a story like this could look embarrassing, to say the least, if we put it in our ships' logs. Hard to explain to people." I exhaled nervously. "Maybe that all adds up to a conspiracy with the enemy."

The crews stood silently at the rails, watching me. They knew I was on the spot.

"He could have popped us out of the water like champagne corks when he left. But I actually don't think he wanted . . . anyway, if you think I did the wrong thing, record it in your logs and report me when we get to Bora Bora. That's all."

Slowly the flanking LCIs fanned away and dropped back into formation.

At twilight I was standing at the rail in the conn tower. My signalman had just finished using the blinker light with the trailing LCIs. "I was just checking, Skipper. The other crews are with you, too. Nothing in the logs about it. I guess we're all in the 'conspiracy' together."

My gunnery officer watched the darkening horizon and the brightening stars. "Imagine a commander who would risk stopping three enemy ships—even rust buckets—to get his crew some cigarettes. He must have been a pretty nice guy."

The helmsman nodded.

"I'm glad we didn't use the deck guns on him," the gunnery officer said.

I began looking forward to talking to the commander's parents in San Francisco. They would be proud of their son and I would be proud of my crew.

The stars brightened in the darkening barrel of heaven. On a coil of rope at the bow of the ship, Irish sat with his harmonica, softly playing the melody he had heard aboard the sub. The deck vibrated and blue cigarette smoke curled back into the night.

No one spoke of the incident again. But, every time we lit a cigarette, we remembered.

* THE END

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by **CARL HANDEL**

Now there's a way for you to get all the excitement that goes with dropping a baited hook into a school of spawning fish. And I guarantee that you can get this thrill any time, and in any pond, lake, river or stream you care to fish. All you need is one drop of liquid out of a little bottle I am ready to send you to try at my risk. In plain words, this liquid is a biotic gland stimulant.

It is a formula that I got from the Eskimos. Eskimos must catch fish in order to live. They can't depend on luck. They depend on a formula. I learned this secret formula from them during the years I was a guide in the Arctic. But I'll tell you about that later.

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If you want to see this kind of action right before your eyes and without waiting to get to a fishing spot, do what I did recently on a television show. Maybe you saw this show. The announcer set out a goldfish bowl with



CARL HANDEL

Fisherman - Guide

He says, "Fish bite like hungry wolves when they get a whiff of 'KETCHEM'."

six goldfish in it. All six fish were either fat and lazy or else they were hypnotized by the bright lights. They were almost motionless. Then I put one drop of "Ketchem" on a matchstick and stuck the matchstick in the water. It was like pulling a trigger on a loaded gun. Instantly all six of those little goldfish converged like lightning on the matchstick. They were so excited they flipped water clear out of the bowl.

Actually there's nothing mysterious about the formula that made these dull, torpid fish suddenly act like hungry wolves. Basically this Eskimo formula is nothing more than employing Nature's own way of stimulating fish to reproduce. But Nature releases this gland stimulating odor only once a year. With "Ketchem," you can perform this seeming miracle any time and any place.

"Ketchem" is absolutely harmless to fish. It has been tested and approved by CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES IN 44 OF THE 48 STATES. Conservation authorities, mind you. I have written proof of this on file

in my office. I have had many invitations from these same Conservation authorities to make up "Ketchem" in bulk form for them to use in State Fish Hatcheries. That's because "Ketchem" not only stimulates fish, it also accelerates their growth.

Well, this is about all I've got to say. Now I want you to try "Ketchem" yourself. I know that if you try it just once you'll never want to fish without it and I'll have a steady customer for life. During my years in the Arctic, I was a guide for engineers and prospectors. We got a few millionaires too—up for the hunting and fishing. I showed them the secret of fishing I had learned from the Eskimos and one of these men prodded me into putting "Ketchem" on the market. He thought it was such a boon to fishermen that I ought to share my "secret" with others. I agreed with him and that's the reason for printing the announcement you are now reading.

What about the price of "Ketchem"? Primarily, I'm a guide and a fisherman. All I know about costs and profits are what an accountant told me. He adds up the price of the refined ingredients, the cost of the bottles, cartons, handling, wrapping, postage and what it costs to run this advertisement in the magazine. Then he added a small profit for my time and work and came up with a price of \$2.00.

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How They Got Lucky Luciano continued from page 15

Motors to be his own grease monkey.

One night Luciano and his two aides held a short, quiet meeting in the back room of a downtown restaurant.

"I never seen nothin' like it, Charlie," Little Davy said admiringly. "Smooth? Hell, it couldn't be better. This Seabury thing ain't even gonna touch us."

"And when it's over and the heat's off," Tommy the Bull chuckled, "boy, can we spread out! Cars and women and dough—We'll be bigger than Capone's guys or anybody! I sure got to hand it to you, Charlie."

"Dry up," Luciano told him bluntly. "Get this, both of you—we ain't gonna flash around. Never! I don't want to see no names in the newspapers. I don't want nobody gettin' tagged by the cops, even for a parking ticket. You keep your noses clean, understand?" He glared at Pennochio.

The big man, eyes wide, nodded. "If you say so, Charlie—"

"I say so," Luciano said flatly. "And don't ever forget it. We stay so quiet nobody even knows we're alive. I don't want my name used anymore. I ain't even gonna use it myself. I'm movin' uptown to the Essex House as 'Charles Lane.' Abe will have to know about it, and Ralph, and a couple of the others. But nobody else. Nobody. And don't come to see me without an appointment. You got it?"

Dumbly, Little Davy and Tommy the Bull nodded. And from then on, to everyone with the exception of his top executives, Lucky Luciano simply disappeared. The runners for the lottery, the dope-pushers and the strong-arm goons went on taking their orders from Charlie; but who Charlie was, what he looked like, where he lived, none of them had any idea.

And as for the management of the Essex House—and later the Barbizon-Plaza and the swank Waldorf-Astoria Towers—all they knew was that they had a new tenant, a well-heeled bachelor who had few callers, who seldom stayed out late and never threw wild parties or gave the hotel any cause for complaint. It was the perfect setup.

One day, Charlie was relaxing in his handsomely furnished suite, looking out over Central Park, when the telephone rang. He picked up the receiver, listened a moment, then said, "Okay, send them up." Putting the phone back in its cradle he grinned slightly. He could afford to be magnanimous. Life was good. For a lousy two or three bills a month, you got a nice joint to live in and a 24-hour guard at the entrance downstairs besides. He was still smiling when a knock sounded at the door. "Come in," he called.

Little Davy and the Bull looked uncomfortable. Little Davy took a deep breath. "It's the whorehouses," he said. He glanced at Pennochio. "Tom thinks we oughta take them over."

Luciano's heavy-featured face darkened. He turned his head slowly, the hooded eyes glaring ferociously at Pennochio.

The Bull, sitting up straight, licked his lips. "Now wait, Charlie," he said, his voice rising. "Just listen, will you? It ain't what you think—"

Luciano's expression stayed dangerously hard. "All right, talk," he said. "It better be good."

The Bull took a deep breath. "Okay, now, look. There's about two hundred houses, here and in Brooklyn. Just in the last couple of years, they been organized in chains. Four guys—Lou

Weiner, Dave Marcus and there's—" Luciano waved a hand impatiently. "I know who the guys are. What about it?"

"All right," the Bull said. "But there's talk that Dutch Schultz is interested."

Luciano's eyes widened, and he stared at Pennochio with new interest.

Little Davy shook his head. "I still say leave 'em alone. There's too many people have to know about it or you don't do business. And the dames—you don't know what in hell they'll do next. It's too risky."

Luciano nodded. "Yeah, I know," he said. "I know better than you do. But I think the Bull's right."

"What the hell!" Betillo stared in astonishment. "Charlie, dames talk! You can't stop them! And we're doin' fine the way we are."

"The Bull's right," Luciano repeated flatly. "The business is damn near all organized now, if only four guys are runnin' it. If we don't take it, somebody else will. And if the Dutchman takes it, he'll be big enough to give us trouble. We gotta take it."

For a moment he sat silent, while Little Davy shook his head. Tom the Bull, taking out a monogrammed hand-kerchief, wiped beads of sweat from his face and sighed with relief.

Luciano frowned. "Okay," he said. "Tomorrow night, have the four bookers at the joint downtown. Ten o'clock. I'll give them the message myself."

The conference, held in a restaurant's back room, was short and to the point. Luciano, looking around at the tense faces of the four brothel-chain bookers, didn't even bother to sit down.

"You guys are through," he told them bluntly. "I'm turning the business over to Little Davy and the Bull."

Middle-aged David Marcus half rose from his chair, his face red. "Goddam it," he sputtered, "you can't—"

Luciano merely glared at him. Little Davy and Tom the Bull stood up and slid their right hands into their pockets. Marcus gulped and sank back into his chair. With a brusque nod, Luciano turned and strode out.

There were, of course, a good many details to be straightened out, but Luciano's talents as an organizer were fully equal to the job. The "houses" were mostly apartments, many in good neighborhoods, each with three or four "packages"—as the girls were called—and a madam. The usual price for entertainment was two or three dollars, and when business was brisk a hard-working "package" could gross as much as \$300 a week. Of this the girl turned over half to the madam. Out of the other half she paid ten dollars a week for a bonding service, five dollars for weekly medical inspection and about \$25 for rent. After buying evening dresses and other necessities, she might end up with about \$75 for accommodating a hundred customers or more. Each week end she would call the booker who would tell her where to report for work the following week. The girls circulated so that the customers wouldn't always be seeing the same old faces, and figures.

The madam's half of the gross was split with the booker. Out of the rest, she paid the maid, crossed the palms of doormen and other "steerers" and paid five dollars for each girl into the general bonding fund. The booker had his hands full, circulating his girls around his string of 40 to 60 houses and scouting for fresh talent. Out of the

booker's take came payments to police and politicians and the split with the men at the top. Altogether, the business grossed about \$12,000,000 a year, with perhaps \$1,500,000 of that going to the mob above the bookers.

There was, however, a little trouble. David Marcus—also known as David Miller—resented the invasion of his business and refused to pay up. Coming home one night, he was set upon by three bruisers who beat him half to death. The meaning was clear, but Marcus was stubborn, he went into hiding. Three days later a car pulled up alongside his, and several young men in it sprayed his car with bullets. Deciding that New York was bad for his health, Marcus went to California. But there he went broke. Desperate and sick, he came back to New York and humbly asked Little Davy for a job. Davy put him to work as booker for a small string of houses—on the mob's terms. To boost the family income, Marcus' wife went to work as a madam.

Another stubborn one was a madam named Joan Martin, who refused to sign up with the organization at all. With an air of pained regret, Abe Wahrman called on her, with a couple of associates. While Abe casually slapped Miss Martin around, his companions went to work on the upholstery, drapes and rugs with knives, and smashed everything they couldn't slash. Miss Martin sought protection from her own connections; but when they found out who was trying to muscle in, they wouldn't lift a finger, for by this time Luciano's influence reached into high political circles as well as into all corners of the underworld. Two nights later, a Luciano assistant named Jimmy Frederico called on Miss Martin and beat her with a lead pipe, and two nights after that a torpedo named Ralph Liguori showed up with a gun. Miss Martin signed.

By the middle of 1934, everything was running smoothly. Early in 1935 things were going so well that a new tenant moved into the ultra-swank Waldorf-Astoria Towers, taking a suite on the 39th floor. An expensively dressed, swarthy man in his middle 30s, he was a bachelor, and extremely quiet. All the Waldorf knew about him was that his name was Charles Ross and he was obviously wealthy, because he maintained a private airplane.

When a special grand jury was sworn in to investigate corruption and rackets in the city, it hardly seemed cause for alarm. The mob's political contacts had been improving steadily. The special grand jury was working with the district attorney's office, and there the contacts were excellent. News of the proceedings, supposedly secret, leaked out so fast that Luciano knew as much about what the grand jury was doing and planning to do as if he had a seat in the jury room. One day the foreman of the grand jury, a hefty six-footer named Lee Thompson Smith, tried to have a subpoena served on a certain Tammany leader. The mob knew all about it in minutes, and within the hour, the Tammany man was warned to keep his mouth shut.

But this, as it turned out, was a mistake. For Mr. Smith, by no means dumb, had suspected leaks, and the warning confirmed his suspicions. Promptly the grand jury went into session—and this time the district attorney's office was firmly excluded. And then, going straight to the top, the grand jury demanded of Governor Lehman that he appoint a special prosecutor for racket investigations, cutting

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out the district attorney completely.

The howl that went up from the district attorney's office was loud and indignant, but futile. Mr. Smith was a determined man, and in midsummer Governor Lehman took action. The man he appointed as special prosecutor was the young former assistant U.S. attorney who had nailed Waxey Gordon. His name was Thomas E. Dewey.

The smart boys snickered. Dewey was only 33, hardly more than a punk. He was a square, from some hick town called Owosso, in Michigan.

The guy Luciano did worry about was Dutch Schultz. In Harlem, the Dutchman was getting too big for his britches. About the middle of October 1935, Luciano called a meeting in a hotel room in Newark, N.J. It was an exclusive gathering. The other persons there were Louis Buchalter, alias Lepke; Jacob Shapiro, alias Gurrah; Henry Shomberg, alias Dutch Goldberg; and a gentleman formerly well-known in Chicago, Johnny Torrio.

At an earlier get-together it had been decided that Luciano, Lepke, Gurrah and Dutch Goldberg, with some help from Torrio, would move in on the Dutchman and demand a cut of his numbers racket profits. The vain Schultz had hit the ceiling and declined, at length and abusively.

Now, the conspirators in Newark had to decide what to do with the reluctant Dutchman. This was business, and what counted was action, not words. A week later the Dutchman and three of his top aides were blasted to death by gunfire as they sat in a Newark saloon. For good measure another Schultz henchman, Marty Krompier, was shot to death on a New York street the same night.

Most of gangland had forgotten about Dewey, for he had been exceptionally quiet. Standard operating procedure for prosecutors in New York had always been to make headlines, loud and often. Dewey not only did not make headlines—he firmly discouraged the press from covering his activities.

On his appointment, Dewey had been offered office space in various official buildings. He had politely declined, and instead rented the 14th floor of the Woolworth Building. This was conveniently near the courts, but certain people who thought it might be useful to keep track of the prosecutor's visitors and his staff found it a frustrating place. There were entrances to it from three streets, and so many elevators that nobody could watch them all. From the 14th floor hallway passersby could see nothing but panels of frosted glass; and inside, the office was divided up by soundproofed, frosted-glass partitions.

Inside his headquarters Dewey worked with five chief assistants: Barent Ten Eyck, smooth and aristocratic; Bill Herlands; Murray Gurfein; Jacob Rosenblum; and a woman lawyer from Harlem, Mrs. Eunice Carter. All were young, none had any political ties, and all were razor-sharp. As chief investigator, Dewey picked Wayne Merrick, formerly of the FBI. Working with Merrick was a force of 75 cops under the command of Acting Deputy Chief Inspector James Lyons, who had been chosen by LaGuardia himself.

"What we're after," Dewey told his staff, "are rackets. Not individual crimes, but crime that's organized. We're not after small fry—we want the big ones."

"What about prostitution?" Eunice Carter asked.

Dewey shook his head. "We all know

it exists, of course. But we don't know that it's organized. Unless it is, we'll leave it alone. We're not here to waste our time prosecuting cheap girls and madams. We're after business rackets, mainly. People like Lepke and Gurrah, in the garment district, and political big shots, like Jimmy Hines; Dutch Schultz and Dixie Davis, that lawyer of his. And the man they called Charlie—Charlie Lucky. He's the biggest of all of them."

"His real name is either Luciano or Lucania," one of the staff reported. "And he has a record. But it's all small-time stuff, and it happened a long time ago. When he got big, he dropped out of sight. We know he's still around, but we don't know just where. He'll be tough."

"None of the big ones will be easy," Dewey said. "And our hardest problem will be getting witnesses. The businessmen these people prey on are afraid to talk. And unless we get witnesses, our hands are tied."

Determinedly, Dewey buckled down again. A big racketeer had to have contacts, no matter how well hidden he was. A little careful listening in the right places disclosed that the only contacts gangland had with Charlie Lucky seemed to be through Davy Betillo, Tom Pennocchio and Abe Wahrman. Dewey got hold of all available records of their telephone calls for the previous two years. There were a suspicious number of these to the better midtown hotels, including the Waldorf—an unlikely place for thugs like these to have friends. After that it was a comparatively simple matter of checking the guest lists of the hotels, going through several thousand names and comparing signatures. This disclosed that the handwriting of three of the men whose names were on the list was identical—Charles Reid, Charles Lane and Charles Ross. Discreet inquiry among hotel employees, aided by old-time police photos of Luciano, nailed it down cold.

It wasn't long afterward that Eunice Carter had a talk with Dewey.

"It's about prostitution again," she said. "Not that I'm a crank on the subject, but I've been hearing things lately that make me believe it really is organized. I think it's a racket, and a big one. I wish we could look into it."

Mrs. Carter had no solid facts, but Dewey wasn't a man to ignore even a faint possibility. He passed the word promptly to Wayne Merrick and his investigating force. "See what you can find out."

The investigators went to work. Most of the girls were flattered when they were asked to tell where they would be next week or the week after that; they would cheerfully explain the workings of the booking process. The madams, less susceptible to flattery, could be approached in other ways, and a bottle or two of good strong whiskey could do wonders.

Going beyond the madams and the bookers was the hard part, but Merrick's investigators traced the lines of organization to Davy Betillo, Tom Pennocchio and Abe Wahrman. But they were stopped there. There was no apparent link with Luciano.

For all Dewey could tell, Luciano might actually be in the clear; this might be something that Betillo and the others handled without him. In any case, the prosecutor prepared to attack. Even if Luciano had nothing to do with prostitution, his chief lieutenants could be hauled in and that would cripple his operations in all fields. Late in

January, 1936, in conference with his top aides, Dewey outlined his secret plans.

"This is a gamble," he said seriously, "and a big one. We have no overwhelming evidence against any of these people except the prostitutes and the madams. Normally, we'd arrest the girls and madams and try to persuade them to produce evidence incriminating the bookers. Then we'd go after the bookers and try to make them give us evidence against the big men."

He paused, looking around the circle of intent faces. "The only trouble is that if we do that, the only ones we're sure of getting are the small fry. The big boys may skip town, or even leave the country, and we'll never catch up with them. So what we're going to do," he went on, with a wry smile, "is arrest the bookers and higher-ups first—and hope to get the evidence on them afterward."

A few days later, on the night of February 1, a detail of Inspector Lyons' special cops fanned out silently over the city. Each cop had to make one arrest, he knew what his man looked like, where he lived and how he spent his time. But he was under the strictest orders not to pick up the suspect at home or at any of his usual haunts; the arrests were to be made when the suspect was alone.

The operation worked perfectly. By the next morning more than 30 executives of Luciano's organization, including a few women, had been picked up and brought to the Woolworth Building. Secrecy was complete. There were a few madams whom Dewey felt were too smart; so for safety's sake the police picked them up, too.

One was the wife of David Marcus. That was, perhaps, the key move in the whole game, though neither Dewey nor anyone else knew it at the time.

Marcus arrived at the Woolworth Building in terrible shape. His heart was acting up again. When he saw his wife there, he almost collapsed. Gray-faced, sobbing, wringing his hands, he explained to the young prosecutor that he and his wife had three children; with both parents locked up, who would take care of them? Dewey pointed out politely that the law might be willing to help Marcus if Marcus first helped the law. In other cubicles staff members were questioning other arrestees, meeting mostly a stony silence. But Marcus was sick to begin with, and his anxiety over his children was more than he could stand. Wheezing, sweating and mopping his anguished face, he began to talk.

Dawn was beginning to show outside as he got to the crucial point. "You knew all this was risky," Dewey said. "Who gave you protection?"

"Little Davy and Abe—that's Abe Wahrman. And Charlie—" Marcus' bloodshot eyes popped wide open, with a look of horror. It was obvious that the name had slipped out, that Marcus had never meant to say it.

The questioning went on, with Marcus getting the name of Charlie thrown at him from every angle. Demoralized, broken, terrified, he fell apart. Before the session was over, he had told the whole story of how Luciano had taken over the prostitution racket, and the quiet Mr. Ross of the Waldorf Towers was firmly linked to the stained women of the dirtiest racket in town.

Luciano, basking in the expensive sunshine of Florida, was blissfully unaware of these events. His first inkling of danger came the afternoon following the raid. That same morning Dewey's



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men had made a second series of raids, pulling in 125 prostitutes and madams. Arrests on that scale couldn't be kept secret, and the papers screamed out the news.

The organization's bail bondsmen promptly went into action and showed up ready to spring their clients on the usual \$200 bonds. To their horror, they discovered that Supreme Court Justice Philip J. McCook, presiding over Dewey's investigation, had set up special court there. And McCook, a brawny, strong-chinned man, holder of a DSC from World War I, was in no mood for fooling around. Bail was set at \$10,000 for each arrestee. The total sum was so much more than the bondsmen could handle that they didn't even try.

And now Dewey began talking to the press. Careful not to disclose the evidence his case was built on, he announced that the lord of the prostitution racket in New York, lately known as Mr. Charles Ross of the Waldorf-Astoria Towers, was in fact Lucky Luciano.

Luciano abruptly decided to end his stay in Florida and took off in his private airplane. But it was too late; he was traced to Hot Springs, Ark., and Dewey announced that his extradition would be promptly requested so that he could stand trial in New York.

It was a terrible blow to Luciano. In the blazing glare of publicity, his costly political connections, so carefully built up for so long, were of no use. Arrested in Hot Springs, he hired as his lawyer the former head of the local bar association, who got him released on bail of a mere \$5,000. But Dewey's indignant protest made headlines all across the country, and Hot Springs officials simply couldn't let it stand. They pulled him back in and raised his bail to a whopping \$500,000.

Luciano fought back desperately. One of his men offered \$50,000 in cash to a state official to block the extradition, and before he was through Luciano spent more than \$200,000 in lawyers' fees trying to block it. But he was just too hot. In April, under heavy guard, he was brought back to New York, where Justice McCook promptly set his bail at \$350,000.

The trial of Lucky Luciano and eight others—Little Davy Betillo, Tom Pennochio, Abe Wahrman, Ralph Liguori, Barney Spiller, Jesse Jacobs, Meyer Berkman and Jimmy Frederico—still stands as a model of criminal prosecution. Going into court, Luciano was still elegant and still confident. But day after day, Dewey called a parade of witnesses who drew the noose tighter and tighter.

In the witness box, for instance, appeared Joan Martin, dark-haired and bespectacled, to tell the story of how she had been beaten and forced to join the prostitution ring. Mrs. Mollie Leonard, another madam, testified that she had been told the head of the ring was "Lucky." Florence Brown, alias Cokey Flo, a former mistress of Jimmy Frederico, testified that she had been present

when Jimmy, Little Davy Betillo and Luciano had discussed the racket's operations.

By the time Luciano himself took the stand, there was only one thing to do. Still elegant, still confident, Luciano denied everything; he even denied he knew the other men on trial with him. And then, at last, the swarthy, shrewd lord of the rackets, the biggest operator of the world's biggest town, came face to face with the boy from the sticks. And in four hours of hammering, snapping cross-examination, Dewey reduced the great Luciano to a sweating, stuttering oaf.

That cross-examination was the clincher. If anybody had doubted Luciano's guilt before, there was no doubt now. With nine defendants being tried on 62 counts each, the jury was out for several hours. But the verdict was clear and sweeping, and a complete victory for Dewey. It was *Guilty . . . Guilty . . . Guilty*—all nine defendants, on all 62 counts. The great Charlie "Lucky" Luciano, the top racketeer in New York, was through.

With a sentence imposed on him, at age 38, of 30-to-50 years in the penitentiary, Luciano would ordinarily have been through for life. But there is a footnote to the story. Shortly after World War II, it was brought to the attention of the governor of New York that Charles Luciano was Italian-born, that he had been brought to this country at age nine but had never acquired citizenship; that he therefore could be deported to Italy. The governor remembered this prisoner, for the governor was Thomas E. Dewey. Apparently seeing no reason why the state should go on feeding Luciano for the rest of his life, Dewey approved his release for immediate deportation.

One would suppose that that would end the story of Luciano, but he had one brief flurry of excitement left in him, like the spasmodic hopeless scurrying of a beheaded chicken. In 1947, he slipped out of Italy, unnoticed by the *carabinieri*, and turned up in Havana, where he was arrested and deported a second time. Back in Italy, he was exiled to Sicily, the place of birth of his parents. Anguished at being denied the civilized benefits of the Italian mainland, Luciano petitioned the government to reconsider his case. Finally, he was permitted to live in Naples, where he went into the medical supply business. Apparently, Luciano has been prosperous, for the appointments of his office and his expensive way of life are the marks of a well-heeled business man.

And there Luciano remains to this day. He lives comfortably, at low Italian prices, and keeps up a number of contacts with the United States. There is some belief that he is still influential in the rackets. But whatever he's doing, it's nothing like the good old days in New York, when the word of Charley Lucky was law to the underworld of the Big Town. Those days are gone forever.

* THE END



The Last Laugh

continued from page 47

spoils was complete did Rudi prod Stan to his feet. Shivering with pain and cold, Stan tried to tell them what he thought of them, but the pain in his jaw was so awful that all he could do was mumble in his throat. They thought this was very funny and began laughing again.

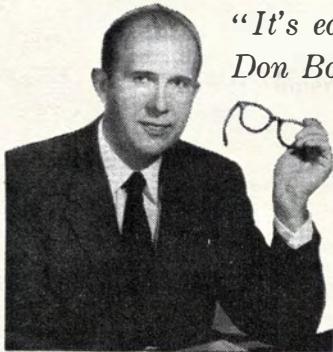
Finally, Anna brought a filthy and ragged pair of overalls in from the barn, and this was all they let him wear. Rudi gave him a large dirty handkerchief to tie up his broken jaw. Then, in his bare feet, shivering uncontrollably from the rain, Stan walked the long miles through the November morning to the Nazi Army camp.

After that, things were kind of hazy and disjointed. All of his memories were dim and confused until he reached the U.S. Army hospital.

One memory was always clear, though—the bedroom in the farmhouse outside Zollenspieker. In this nightmarish memory, he lay bloodied on the floor while Rudi and Anna stood over him and laughed.

He had never told a soul about his humiliation in the bedroom at Zollenspieker: it was too shameful to mention. And in time they gave him a discharge and a Purple Heart.

The years went by meaninglessly after that, as did a number of unremembered jobs. Stan lived mostly off his disability pension and worked only when he was tired of sitting around his furnished room. He had no friends and he rarely saw his family. His life had no meaning; one day was just like all the rest—until the morning when



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During a recent interview, Don Bolander, director of Career Institute of Chicago and a leading authority on adult education, said, "You don't have to go back to school in order to speak and write like a college graduate. You can gain the ability quickly and easily in the privacy of your own home through the Career Institute Method." In his answers to the following questions, Bolander tells how.

QUESTION: What is so important about a person's ability to speak and write?

Answer: People judge you by the way you speak and write. Poor English weakens your self-confidence—handicaps you in your dealings with other people. Good English is absolutely necessary for getting ahead. You can't win the respect and confidence of other persons without a sure command of good English.

QUESTION: What do you mean by a "command of English"?

Answer: A command of English means you can express yourself clearly and easily without fear of embarrassment. It means you can write well, carry on a good conversation—also read rapidly and remember what you read. Good English can help you throw off self-doubts that may be holding you back.

he woke up and realized what he had to do. It was so simple he wondered why it had eluded him so long. He would go back to Germany and kill Anna and the nightmare would stop.

It was a perfect plan. It had taken him here to the hill over Zollenspieker. It had led him to the Paris flea-market where he had bought the bicycle and the camping outfit—and the Wehrmacht bayonet. He had cycled a hundred miles without saying a word to a soul.

The bicycle was hidden beyond the hill now, waiting to take him back. With a start, he realized that his plan was no longer a plan—it was a reality.

He walked around the barn and toward the window. Someone moved inside the house, and he caught a glimpse of corn-yellow hair. A hidden worry that she might be gone was relieved, and he knew it was his day at last. Standing as high as a mountain, he stalked to the door, kicked it open and walked in.

It was almost too good to be true. Rudi was there too, sitting by the stove. His hand clutched hard at the hilt of the bayonet, and he felt sweat break out all over his face. Anna came into the room and they both gaped at him.

"I've come back," he said, almost shouting. "You remember me, don't you?"

The red painted mouth smiled in pleased surprise. "Of course I remember you," she said uncertainly. "You are the *ami* with the chocolate. We had such fun. How nice of you to remember—"

"Slut!" Rudi shouted at her. "I knew you were getting things from the Americans when I was away. And what

happened to my share?" Rudi asked. "You got your share," she screamed at him. "You rotten excuse for a man."

Then, for the first time, Stan began to see with his eyes, instead of his memory. It was Rudi in the chair, all right, but not the strong, stocky soldier who was so fast with his rifle butt. This was a caricature of the other Rudi, a thin, ashen-faced man with claw-like hands that never stopped twitching. The yellowed eyes bulged as they looked at the woman, the mouth quivered and a little saliva ran down the chin.

And the woman wasn't a girl any more. The once proud breasts were lost in quivering rolls of fat that hid every trace of the young girl who had once possessed that body. Only the yellow hair had any life, and it served only to frame and magnify the waistland of the painted face.

With startling clarity, Stan saw for the first time that what they had done to him was nothing, compared with what they had done to each other. An unseen weight was lifted from his shoulders. He was free at last.

It was the comic joke of all time. He had been planning to kill them—when the worst torture in the world he could think of was to let them live.

"Do I have something for you?" he said through his laughter. "A little present?" He threw the bayonet down. "Here," he said, "it's yours."

Stan walked out into the sunshine, spent and exhausted, but feeling better than he had ever felt in his life.

The truth was he couldn't kill those people sitting back there in that dirty room. That was impossible. They had killed themselves years before.

★ THE END

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Safari Girl continued from page 39

there was little change. Fully clothed, we struggled across through swirling waters that were up to my shoulders. Once, the wild current knocked me off my feet and I was being swept downstream when the warden grabbed me and pulled me to shore.

That night it was clear and beautiful, and the incessant bird and animal sounds made an incomparable symphony that put me to sleep. I awakened late the next morning. The sun was already making my pack feel hot and sticky from the leftover evening's damp. I washed in a puddle of rainwater that had collected in a large rock crevice, and the warden made some tea.

I was just telling my companion how odd it felt to be spending New Year's Day in Africa, when I saw an enormous rhinoceros lurch out of the brush and stop about 20 yards away from us. He was swaying slightly, trying to locate our scent. I was too panic-stricken to speak; I just pointed.

The warden jumped to his feet and said softly: "The gun!" We were about as far from the car as the rhino was from us. We dived into the front seat, and as the warden pulled the gun out of its case, I desperately tried to open the bullet bag. The rhino lumbered forward, then went into a full charge.

The first bullet staggered him, and he veered to one side, thundering past us toward the river. The warden ran down the ridge after him, in spite of the terrible danger of tracking a wounded rhino, and fired twice more. The beast stumbled and crashed to the ground, where in a couple of minutes he died.

A few weeks later I was sitting on the porch of game warden David Sheldrick's house, chatting with him and his assistant, Bill Woodley about poaching in their section of Tsavo National Park East. The Park was 5,000 square miles and was supervised by a handful of rangers and two wardens.

The tales of poaching I heard from the wardens were fascinating. They said that they were doing the very best they could, but it wasn't enough. All of them were certain that in their lifetime some types of game would easily become extinct unless they got more backing from the government.

On Saturday, the 21st and Sunday, the 22nd of January, 1956, four sections of the Masai tribe held their *Emwo Ekiten* ceremony at Uaso Kedong. This means that a new age-grade was initiated as the next Masai warrior group, and more chiefs were selected. This ceremony takes place approximately once every 15 years, and had never before been photographed. A friend, formerly with the Kenya Special Police, knew one of the Masai chiefs and arranged for me to be present.

The ceremony started at four P.M. on Saturday, with youngsters of the four sections taking part. The Purko, Kekonyuki, Il Damat and Nasin Gishu lined up on one side of a large open space, bordered on the other three sides by elders and women, and prepared to pursue a wild bull. The bull had to be caught by the right horn. It must be done this way because the Kekonyuki are members of the Il Tiyeke, which means "right hand."

In short order, a member of the Kekonyuki clan caught the bull's right horn, and it seemed that the Kekonyuki would be the leaders of the Warrior Group. However, the Purko were adjudged the winners because a part of

young Purko initiates had ambushed the bull on its way to the arena, brushed aside the elders and grasped the bull's right horn. The Purko had decided to use these tactics because the ceremony was taking place in a Kekonyuki *manyatta* (village), and they were certain they would have no chance of coming out the victors.

The following morning at dawn, the bull was led away by the village elders to a well-hidden steep ravine. All of the men and youngsters who had taken part in the ceremony attended. Women were not allowed. There were about 370 youngsters and 70 elders. The bull was suffocated after a hole had been drilled in his back to let out the evil spirits, and its blood was collected through a throat vein. This was mixed with sour milk from calabashes which had been scoured first with fresh urine and some honey beer. All of the youngsters lined up to take a sip of this concoction. Now they are considered men.

The bull was skinned and the elders cut its hide into rings which are worn on the third finger of the right hand. These rings consist of strips of hide about four or five inches long with a slit at one end through which the finger passes. The rest of the meat is carefully cut up into sections, the most important of which are the back of the lung, the saddle and the floating ribs.

The bull meat was cooked, and at about four P.M. on Sunday afternoon, the young men sat in a large circle leaving a small gap at one end. They sat shoulder to shoulder, and no one was allowed to step over them. According to their belief, anyone doing so would be cutting them to pieces and breaking the unity and harmony of the forthcoming warrior group.

A party of elders then began to initiate the youngsters. Three young men were proclaimed the spiritual leaders, then had their heads shaved and were given staves with ostrich feather tips. They also wore colored hide cloaks and had round brass discs on their chests, suspended from their ear lobes. The first of these young warriors-to-be had supplied the bull for the ceremony. Therefore as the elder carrying the meat passed around the ring, he daubed it three times on the forehead of the boy, who then took a small bite from it. Another group of elders followed, carrying twigs cut from a bush. This bush is supposed to contain stimulating juices and the youngsters chewed the leaves.

Another elder approached, carrying the bull-hide rings, one of which was slipped over the third finger, right hand of each initiate. He followed an old chief carrying small pieces of the meat which had been chopped up and which were given to the youngsters to eat. The ceremony continued as a group of elders with a little pot of white clay smeared a circle of white around each youngster's face (the elders were already decorated this way). Then, as the last elder passed by, the youngsters began to chant.

Finally, when the ceremony was completed, they all got up, retrieved their sticks and marched in close order, still chanting, to the village. There they circled the area twice, then entered the village to receive the congratulations of all those who had not taken part in the ceremony.

I am probably the only woman, Masai or otherwise to see this ceremony. And considering the changing times in Kenya, I may be the only woman who will ever see a Masai age-grade become warriors. **★ THE END**

Laffey's Head

continued from page 21

Laffey with him," she mused. "Good old Laffey always calms him down when he has a couple too many and wants to fight somebody. Where do you suppose Laffey was tonight, Ricco? Him and Billy are usually together. They're real good friends, you know. Ricco, what do you suppose he had in that box, anyway?"

"What?" Ricco grunted, moistening a stubby thumb.

"Ricco, ain't you been listening to me?"

"There was a cop in here tonight," Ricco said morosely. "You spot him, kid? The guy in the gray topecoat."

"I guess," Maggie nibbled thoughtfully at a fingernail. "So what! We're all honest around here."

"Nobody's all honest," Ricco said darkly. "Something's up when a plain-clothes cop starts hangin' around."

On her way home, Maggie remembered the Britisher's idle remark about the head. But of course that was silly, she thought, waiting on the curb for the last bus.

She went back to work at six that evening. As usual, the Anchor wasn't very busy at that hour, and Ricco was hunched on the tall stool behind the cash register.

"Was he in today, Ricco?" she asked eagerly.

Ricco's tiny head nodded, the heavy jowls quivering.

"He ask about me? Did he still have the box with him?"

"The cop, I meant," Ricco said sourly. "Not Billy Foss." He pursed his thick lips. "Name's Sergeant Combs—

must be a new transfer in the precinct. I thought I knew them all," Ricco scowled blackly. "He was askin' about Laffey."

"About Laffey!" Maggie said. "Is Laffey missing, Ricco?"

He lifted his shoulders in a massive shrug.

"But they're pals. Billy and Laffey hardly go anywhere without each other. You know that, Ricco."

"So, I know that," he said.

As the evening crowd started to drift in, some seamen off the *Ellie* came to the bar. Maggie asked them if they had seen Laffey. They hadn't. When she inquired discreetly after Billy, they shrugged and spread their hands.

"Got another girl, maybe," one of them teased her.

Along about ten, the British seaman came in and bought a beer.

"I'm pleased to see your unmanly bloke with the box ain't in, sweet'eart," he greeted her. "Now what say you an' me get better acquainted?"

"Don't bother," she said loftily. "I'm not so hard up as all that!"

"Oh, come now, I ain't such a bad one," he persisted. "Better natured than 'im, I bet."

"Billy's usually a real sweet guy," she snapped.

"It's the nice, sweet ones what fools the innocent ladies, sweet'eart. For instance, take that bloke in Wapping last year. Nice little fella, mild as May, the journalists all said. A ladies' air dresser by trade, he was. But he 'ad four lady friends stashed away be'ind the parlor wallpaper!"

"Oh, stop it!" Maggie said, turning away.

But that did it. Laffey was missing. And the cops were looking for him.

And Billy hadn't been himself last night. And . . . what was in the box, anyway? She marched down to the end of the bar, took off her apron and put on her coat.

"I'm going out a minute, Ricco."

The dull little raisin eyes peered mournfully at her out of the flat, doughy face. The nodding head was swallowed up between the shrugging shoulders.

Outside, the fog fingered her face clammy and trailed about her in thin gray swirls. In the harbor, a steamer's whistle hooted sadly, the only sound other than the tattoo of her own feet.

She reached the hotel where Billy put up when the *Ellie* was in port. The electric sign swam wanly at her through the murk: S AR HOT L. The neon in the T and the E had burned out long ago.

The night clerk was dozing over a tattered detective story magazine, and she wished she knew Billy's room number. She hesitated, then leaned over and shook him awake.

"Which is Mister Foss's room? Is he in?"

The old clerk scrubbed a mottled hand across his bald head and yawned up at the key rack. "Out," he said, gazing appreciatively at Maggie's wide green eyes and her copper hair with the fog droplets sparkling in it.

"Listen, Pop," she said breathlessly, "I'm a real good friend of his. I'll wait for him in his room, if it's all right?"

The old head shook stubbornly. "'Gainst the rules." The grin got a little lascivious around the edges. "You oughta be ashamed of yourself, Miss!"

"Come on, Pop. You can make an exception," she coaxed, trying to smile wistfully.

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The head went on shaking, the grin even more lascivious now. Maggie opened her purse. A worn five-dollar bill was all she had till payday, but she sighed and reluctantly took it out.

The clerk sighed, too. "I never seen you at all, Miss," he said. "But you still ought to be ashamed of yourself!" A key clinked softly on the counter, as he plucked the bill deftly from Maggie's hand. "Room three hundred seven."

Maggie went up the stairs to the third floor and down a dingy corridor to a door marked 307.

"Billy," she called, rapping lightly. After a minute, she unlocked the door, slid quickly inside and stood quaking in the stuffy darkness. Her fingers found the light switch, and a dusty ceiling globe filled the place with a dim glow.

The room was larger than Maggie had expected, with a high, old-fashioned ceiling and ancient, faded paper on the walls. There was a sagging bed, a battered dresser, a couple of chairs, and a door that opened into a messy-looking bathroom. Hastily she turned and locked the hallway door. The dresser, obviously, was the likeliest place to look for the box. It was under a mess of dirty laundry in the second drawer she opened. It was heavy and she needed both hands to lift it to the dresser top. Taking a deep breath, she fumbled at the brass catch with stiff fingers lifted the lid slowly.

Maggie gasped as a hank of black hair and the curve of an ear with wrinkled yellow skin edged into view. Dizzy, she slammed the lid back down and grabbed the corner of the dresser for support. Sudden terror made her wheel around. Then, as she watched with horrified eyes, the door knob turned slowly, and the door creaked softly as though someone was trying to force it open. The knob turned again impatiently, and she heard a muffled voice as a heavy weight strained against the lock.

Panic turned Maggie's limbs to jelly. There had to be some way to escape—the window! The shade shot up at the nervous tug of her hand, revealing a fire escape. Behind her, the door creaked and rattled on its hinges, and the sash resisted her frantic effort to lift it. Of course—it was locked! She flipped the catch and it came up easily.

The door shook and thundered as she put a long leg over the window sill and stepped out. Below her, the spidery iron framework dropped away into a black abyss. It was only three flights down, but it felt like a hundred as she began her scuffing, sliding rush down the slippery iron treads. Above her, a voice shouted hoarsely and pursuing feet clanged loudly.

The last section of the iron ladder teetered under her weight, dipped dizzy into blackness and deposited her with a bump beside a rough brick wall. The ladder see-sawed up again as she froze in the shadows. Moments later it swung earthward and feet pounded heavily down it.

"See her?" a voice said savagely.

"No. But it's a dead end," another voice said. "She had to go this way, out to the street. And put away that damn gun, you fool. It's only one dame. You want to have the whole neighborhood hollerin' copper?"

Footsteps pounded away over the damp cobblestones. Maggie saw them framed in the dim light at the end of the alley. One was short and burly; the other tall and thin. Then they faded into the mist and were gone.

Slowly she peeled her body away from the wall and dared to breath again. There was no sound except for a tiny, sighing drip of water and, out on the river, a foghorn wail.

The street was empty when she crept furtively out of the alley. A few feet to her left, the S AR HOT L sign blinked drearily over the sidewalk. It was a street of mean little shops and small waterfront businesses, all closed up tight. It must be about midnight, she calculated. Maggie turned to her right, walking swiftly at first, resisting the impulse to run. But by the time she reached the next corner, panic overcame caution. She turned right again and ran down a narrower, even dimmer street of dark stone fronts with iron railings angling steeply up to shadowed, blank doorways.

Halfway down the block, on the opposite sidewalk, a shape appeared from behind one of the tall stoops and stepped into the feeble circle of a streetlight. Maggie stopped, the heartbeats crowding into her throat.

"Hey" the short, burly figure cried harshly, and started across the street toward her. She wheeled and ran back the way she had come.

"Hey!" the voice cried again, louder now. "Hey, Dinny! Here she is!"

At the corner she stopped and looked about wildly. Under the hotel sign she saw the tall, thin one. She crossed the street and began running again, hearing feet pounding loudly on the wet cement behind her. A vacant store front blurred past her; then a low, rusty iron railing, abruptly breaking where steep stone steps curved down to a basement door. She plunged into this unpromising rathole to crouch, shaking, among the old, littered newspapers and cluttered junk in its dark-est corner.

The footsteps hammered along the street, paused, and came back slowly.

"Now where the hell did she go to?" a guttural voice snarled.

"Gotta find her" the other voice said. "If she gets away . . . !"

"We'll get her!" the guttural voice snapped. "She ducked in somewhere. No damn dame can outrun us, Dinny." It muttered away into disgusted silence, before rising again, "Look! Across the street! Ain't the gate in that junkyard fence open?"

"Yeah!" the second voice cried.

Maggie was sure the dank hole in which she crouched would be next. They would be back any moment. She felt fear tower shrilly in her, and she darted blindly up the steps.

"Here she is, I got her!"

The tall one had lagged behind the other. He whirled now, his hand clamping savagely around her arm, the momentum of his spring carrying them both up against the railing. She still had the teakwood box in her two hands and the impact sent a corner of it painfully into her ribs.

"Take your dirty hands off me!" she screeched, slamming the box as hard as she could into the thin man's face.

He reeled back, swearing hoarsely, as she spun out of his grasp and ran.

Maggie ran with the desperation of an animal fleeing for its life; around the corner and up the street of narrow stone fronts, past the tall stoops and the blank, unhelpful doors. There was a terrible nightmare sameness about the hideous, empty, fogbound world through which she was running, with her heels clattering sharply on the gleaming sidewalk and the deeper, hol-lower pounding of those other feet coming implacably along behind her.

Then, abruptly, as she ran through the mist around a corner she was back at the bar. She pushed in.

"Ricco!" she croaked. "Ricco . . ." The breath pumped and rattled in her throat. "Am I glad to see you, Ricco!"

"You look beat, kid," he grunted.

The lone customer at the bar turned.

"Billy!" she cried. Then she remembered the box and shrank away from him.

"Now what's all this?" Billy growled. "You said she wouldn't be in no more, Ricco."

The door opened and slammed shut again.

"Ha! You two!" Ricco grunted. "Couple fine guys I sent out on a job!"

"Hell, Ricco," the guttural voice complained, "she run like a bangtail and she fought like a wildcat. But we never lost her."

They advanced into the Anchor like a pair of Zombies in gray snapbrim hats and dark topcoats. Their faces were smooth and pale and expressionless.

In unison their right hands loosened the top buttons of their coats and slid inside.

"Ricco!" Maggie cried.

She felt her shoulder grasped in a firm hand that spun her around and back, behind Billy Foss's broad-shouldered bulk.

"Call 'em off, Ricco," Billy rasped thinly, "before I take 'em apart—and you and the joint, too!"

The two hands slid out of the dark coats, holding identical snubnosed revolvers.

"Dinny," Ricco said softly, "go back and put the lock on the door. Don't lose your head, Billy-boy. Shootin' might bring the cops down on us. You

don't want that neither."

Abruptly the thin man jerked his head around at Ricco, the hat climbing up his forehead. Out in the street, a low, growling whine filled the night, dropping swiftly, coming fast.

"You shouldn't have let her come back here," Ricco mumbled angrily, "with cops watchin' the place."

There was the screech of rubber and brakes out in front. Then the door burst open and the Anchor was swarming with blue coats and twinkling brass buttons. It seemed to Maggie she had never laid eyes on a prettier sight. Then her eyes opened wide. One of the policemen came in and grabbed the box.

"Billy!" she wailed. "The box! Don't let them look in the box . . .!"

"Ah yes," Sergeant Combs said with a hard grin, "the box. Fetch it here, Reilly."

"You should've seen the sergeant's face," Maggie said a few days later, as she drew a beer for the British seaman. "There was a head in it, just like you said!"

"No!" the Englishman said. "A man's head?"

"Yes—Laffey's head! I mean, not his real head; it was one of those shrunken ones like they get from the head hunters of the Amazon, or somewhere. Only Billy says they're mostly fakes they just sell to the tourists."

"Fancy that!" the Britisher said.

"The emeralds were inside of it," Maggie explained.

"Emeralds?" The Britisher shoved back his cap and scratched his head. "What emeralds was that?"

"Why, the ones Laffey was smuggling in."

"Just who is this here Laffey?" he

asked patiently.

"Why, he's the third engineer on the *Ellie Frye*. A real good friend of Billy's, though of course that's all over now. Laffey smuggled them in for quite a while, and made a pretty good thing out of it by himself. Only the trip before this last one, Ricco's boys got hold of him and said they were cutting in. Of course Laffey didn't go for that, only he was scared of them. So when the *Ellie* docked, he hid himself in Billy's cabin and asked Billy to get rid of the emeralds for him."

"Billy didn't want to get Laffey caught and sent to jail. Still, he couldn't sell 'em for Laffey, like Laffey wanted, because my Billy's honest and wouldn't do a thing like that. So you can see what a fix he was in." Maggie set her dimpled elbows on the bar and laced her fingers under her chin. "Anyway it all worked out okay—except that with Ricco in jail, I had to find a new job."

"Well," the Britisher comforted her, "at least you 'ad no trouble findin' another place. A good-looker like you really dresses up a place."

"Thank you," Maggie said graciously. "But it's only a temporary job, you know. Remember those jade earrings Billy had for me?"

"Beautiful!" the Britisher said. "Match your eyes exactly, they do."

"Oh, these?" Maggie shook her head, the earrings swinging against the rich, coppery swirl of her hair. "These come from Macy's basement. Billy traded the real earrings off for something else." She extended a hand turning it in a graceful flutter.

It was really a very modest little diamond, but it sparkled bravely.

★ THE END

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on the girls. He didn't complain much.

"Now, you stay awake, Bob," Mustang told him.

Frey grinned and looked in at the six women. "Take your time," he said.

In a voice that was little more than a whisper, Hilda said to Frey, "You behave yourself or I will kill you."

And that was the way they worked it. Every time there was a job, one of the men would be left behind to guard the girls. However, by the end of the second week, all six girls stopped pretending to each other that they weren't enjoying their captivity, and the guard duty was dropped.

But Beth Johnson wasn't a woman to let pleasure interfere with business for too long. "I don't know about you girls," she told them one day, "but I don't exactly see myself turning into a female desert rat—no matter how good a man I've got for myself. There's real money being spent in Corpus Christi and I aim to get my hands on a lot of it."

"We could wait a little while," Anne Riley said wistfully.

"That money'll still be there in a month or two," Min Walker said.

Beth shook her head incredulously. "You sound like a pack of love-struck school girls who never had a man in your whole lives."

"Now, Beth . . ." Peggy Fern started.

"Don't 'now Beth' me. I've never seen a rich woman who couldn't take her pick of *any* man she wanted."

The girls looked at one another uneasily. Then Hilda Boulouc said, "You are right. We have come out here for gold—not for love." She paused. "But how can we get away from here? We cannot walk . . ."

Beth Johnson smiled slowly. "I know just how we can do it."

The other girls gathered around her and she outlined her plan. "And when we're finished with them," she concluded, "they'll not only take us to Corpus Christi, but they'll pay good money to be rid of us to boot."

That night, when the men returned to camp, they noticed something different about the girls. Jeb Tracy saw it in Jeannie Clemens' eyes. Andy Walker felt it in the way Peggy Fern took his hand and said, "I've missed you." It was just that something was different.

As soon as Anne Riley and Pat Quinn retired to their part of the cave, she told him, "Let's stay by ourselves tonight and not eat with the others." Pat grinned a mile wide and hurried outside to get two plates of the rabbit stew that was cooking in the big pot.

When he returned and sat down on the floor of the cave beside Anne, she looked at him queerly and said, "Now, Pat baby, won't you please go and wash yourself some? You got dirt on your hands and you need a shave real bad."

Up front Beth Johnson said to Mustang Gray, "Can't you get us a softer bed, sweetie? And couldn't you bring me back a new dress from town next time you go in? Black has always been my favorite color. It's sexy, don't you think, honey? Why, I remember back in . . ."

"Sweetie, can't you stop that snoring?" Min Walker said to Ernie Holloway when they were tucked into bed that night. "And I wish you'd shave off that mustache, too. I never could really go for a man with a mustache."

And then there was the laundry episode. Ernie Holloway stretched awake one morning and reached for

Min Walker. But she wasn't there. Holloway, a big, slow-moving man, yawned, shook the sleep out of his eyes and reached for his shirt. But the shirt wasn't there either. He pushed his legs around and reached over for his trousers, but they weren't on the rock shelf where he always put them before going to sleep.

Wearing only his long johns, he walked outside and saw his shirts, socks, coat and trousers, flapping merrily against the clear morning sky on a long line between two pine trees. And then he saw the six girls bent over big tubs scrubbing away at shirts and socks and coats and trousers. Soon, all of the men were standing about in their long johns, watching the women scrub their clothes.

Mustang called out to Beth and asked her just what in the name of hell she had done with all his clothes. She kissed him lightly on the lips. "I just thought you'd like to have them nice and fresh, that's all, honey."

There was nothing the men could do to control the six determined blondes. The following Saturday morning, the men found themselves being scrubbed by the girls. Six grown men, smoking cigars and chewing tobacco, being bathed like six babies in tubs. They protested at first, but they had to admit that the bath was easier to take than the nagging. Jeannie Clemens became the camp barber, and each man was forced to sit still on a rock while she cut his hair. The girls, in turn, always managed to spend a good part of each day walking about with curlers in their hair, or cream on their faces. And when the men complained, they were told that there are some things a woman had to do during the day if she was going to look beautiful at night.

It wasn't long before the men decided that they had had enough of this domesticity. Finally, they all agreed to take the girls to Corpus Christi and get rid of them for good.

But when Mustang told the women of this decision, their faces grew long and they began muttering among themselves. At last Beth Johnson came forward and said, "The girls and I have talked it over. We don't want to go to Corpus Christi."

"Hey, what kind of talk is that?" Andy Walker asked.

Walker's girl, Peggy Fern, turned on him angrily. "Land's sake now, Andy Walker. Ain't you ever heard of love?"

"Love!" Mustang exclaimed. The whole outlaw band was completely taken aback.

"Yes, we're in love," Beth Johnson repeated, cuddling up to Mustang. "What's more, we aim to stay with you sweet gents for the rest of our born days. Just like we was married up real proper." She laughed and the other girls laughed, too. But the men wore sorry expressions, bewildered and a little broken.

That night, the gang discussed this new development. Pat Quinn said, "For an hour or two a day, they're sure mighty nice to have around. But the rest of the time . . . I mean . . . you know how that damn woman keeps at me to shave and wash my socks and all."

"We know," Mustang said wearily. "We know."

"Well, we could just ride off," Ernie Holloway said. "We can find ourselves another camp easy enough, an' it would be worth it."

"And leave 'em here?" Andy Walker asked.

Holloway shrugged. "Why the hell not?"

Andy shook his head. "No sir. A man has got to draw the line somewhere. I don't mind hittin' a woman around. But I'm not gonna leave one to rot with the damn rattlesnakes."

"Then what are we gonna do?" Jeb Tracy asked.

"We could try slappin' em' down some," Pat Quinn said.

"Wouldn't work," Mustang said. "It just wouldn't work . . ."

The girls continued their campaign: nagging, going around in curlers and creams, complaining they were always tired and lying about like old ladies in the straw beds. It went on for three months, and there wasn't a man in the gang who wasn't at the raw end of his nerves.

"Hell, I'm gettin' to feel like some broken-down little bank clerk with a wife and all," Jeb Tracy moaned to the others one night. "Used to be all a man had to worry about was either gettin' hisself shot or caught."

When the men finally told the girls they would give them anything they wanted if they would please go to Corpus Christi, Beth Johnson put it straight on the line. They would leave all right—but not until each one of them was paid \$500 in cash for the time they had spent in the hills.

The men laughed when they heard this.

"I swear the pack of you are plain crazy!" Andy Walker exclaimed.

"Don't you know I could just put a bullet through that pretty belly of yours?" Pat Quinn said to Anne Riley.

"Five hundred dollars each," Beth Johnson said calmly. "And cash! You know you aren't going to put any bullets through anybody's belly."

It did not take the outlaws long to see that they had no choice in the matter. If they were to be rid of the women, they would have to give them what they wanted. So the next morning, Mustang and his men rode into Corpus Christi and robbed the Central Bank there, taking it for a little more than \$4,000. A few hours later, they returned to the camp and paid off the girls—\$500 for each one.

"You're very generous," Beth said when Mustang handed her the money. "Just take it with no speeches," Gray said.

The women were taken to the edge of Corpus Christi. There were no fond farewells. The women smiled, but the men looked weary and humiliated. Only Mustang seemed unperturbed. When Andy Walker asked him what he was so happy about, he laughed. "You'll see soon enough, Andy boy."

Beth Johnson and the other girls finally arrived at the fine house of Madame Moustache on State Street, but only to tell her they were not going to work for her.

"You see," Beth explained, "we got some capital and we figure we're going to open up our own little place. You don't mind a little competition, do you?"

The next morning, all six of them went to the Central Bank and deposited all their money—exactly what Mustang expected they would do.

In the years that followed, Gray was fond of telling how he had tricked the six fine ladies from New York. He and his men waited three days, then rode into Corpus Christi and robbed the Central Bank. And they got back every cent those sweet little ladies had deposited the day before.

★ THE END

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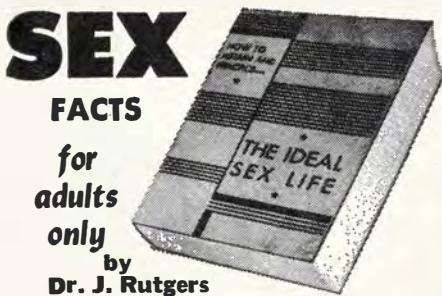
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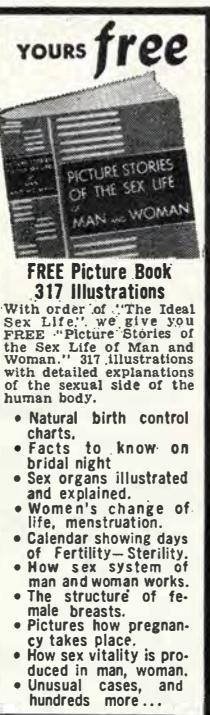


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The Double Standard

continued from page 29

The bartender beamed with pleasure.

"Extra strong," Garver said. "It's our anniversary." When Garver looked up again, the Mexican in the white suit was smiling at them. Again, he nodded politely, and Garver nodded back.

"God, he's handsome," Mariane whispered.

The bartender brought the drinks in tall, foggy glasses crammed with ice. Garver offered his money and the bartender shook his head. He gestured toward the man at the bar. Again they went through the ritual of nodding. The Mexican turned his back on them politely, to show that he didn't wish to interfere with their conversation.

Garver sucked in the rum and thought about the long-legged women. He took off his coat and hung it over the chair. The rum was cold, but his face felt flushed . . . With his hands behind his back, his ivory teeth set in a damnable handsome grin, Garver sauntered up to Carmen. Her deep brown eyes told him all there was to know. She leaned against the wall and scuffed her bare feet in the red sand of the bullring, waiting for him to take her. Then he heard the blaring trumpet and, behind him, an angry snorting. The bull was led into the ring . . .

"Listen," Mariane said, tugging at his arm. "They're playing 'La Virgen De La Macarena'. In the next room, Garver. The band. They're playing the bullfight song, remember?"

"Oh yes," he said. Mariane leaned back again, propping her elbows on the arms of the chair, a cigarette in one hand and her drink in the other. A curl of her hair had come loose and dangled wantonly across her forehead. She blew at it and smiled up at the Mexican, who looked away. Warm, stale air washed over them from the ceiling fan.

Garver looked up as the door opened. The three soldiers came in, walked to the bar and ordered beer. Garver could see the corporal's face in the mirror over the bar; he was staring hard at Mariane.

"I saw me a pretty girl out there," the corporal said loudly. "An eager quail. Man, I can always tell them."

Garver pushed back his chair and stood up. He looked around for a weapon and then shrugged. That would be ridiculous. They would only take it away from him. Mariane was looking at him, her eyes wide. The corporal laughed.

Suddenly the Mexican in the white suit walked up beside the corporal, spoke softly and pointed to something in his hand. The soldiers listened to him. The Mexican grinned politely, and the soldiers turned and went meekly out of the bar. The Mexican nodded to Garver.

"Come and join us," Garver said, overwhelmed with relief. "Let me buy you a drink."

"I do not wish to intrude," the Mexican said.

"Our pleasure," Garver said.

The Mexican came to the table, bowed to Mariane and sat down. The bartender brought him a drink of rum and Garver ordered two more Planter's Punches. The Mexican had copper skin, a thin mustache and neatly combed black hair. His suit was pure, unblemished white, and Garver noticed that even his fingernails were cleanly manicured. Garver introduced himself and Mariane.

"I am Juan Santos," the Mexican said. "I drink to your long health."

"What did you say to the soldiers?"

Garver asked, "if you don't mind telling me."

"It is nothing. I am a minor functionary in the city government. I merely showed them a credential and asked if they were familiar with the Acuna jail. They were. So they left. Very simple."

Garver relaxed. A city official, he thought. They couldn't have been luckier. Now they would be assured of peace and pleasantness. He attacked his second Planter's Punch, and his vision blurred. When he looked up the bartender smiled happily at him.

Later, Garver couldn't remember exactly how long they spent in the bar. He was sure it was several hours. He had never seen Mariane drink so much before. As she drank, she became more girlish and her body seemed to come alive. Whenever her body touched him, he felt her quiver. She was in one of her more violent Saturday-night-at-the-club moods, bobbing her head and winking coquettishly. Garver drunkenly watched Santos, but the Mexican behaved perfectly. Mariane talked loudly, and flirted with Santos. The Mexican shook his head and said the floor was very dirty when she kicked off her shoes and wanted to dance. Mariane laughed. "Why wouldn't a man bring his wife to Acuna?" Mariane asked. "You know, Juan. Tell me."

"I must be drunk or I would not tell you," Santos said. "The soldiers think of Acuna in terms of the 'Stockade.' The Stockade is a section of the city which is filled with bars. In every bar there

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are from twenty to thirty prostitutes. They come from the little villages and farms to work in the border towns for a while. When they make enough money some go home and live well. Some even go to Mexico City into fine houses. Many, of course, go nowhere but into the gutter." Garver leaned on his elbows and stared at Santos. The Mexican rolled his glass in his palms and smiled apologetically at Garver. "Excuse me for talking so frankly to your wife," he said. "It was very presumptuous."

"That's okay," Garver said, waving his hand. "Forget it. You said there were hundreds of these long-legged women?"

Santos looked puzzled. "I said nothing about long legs. Yes, there are hundreds of girls. Many have long legs, I suppose."

"Hmmm," Garver said.

"You remember what I told you about the double standard," Mariane said.

"Sure," Garver said. But he was already far from them . . . He sauntered into a bar, throwing back the swinging doors. The girls looked up and gasped. Who was this tall, rich, handsome American? They rose from their tables and rushed him. Several of them had such long legs, they seemed to be walking on stilts. The smell of gardenias was overwhelming. Or was it roses? His body was rigid, his face composed. He looked up at one of the girls. She was almost seven feet tall. That was too long-legged. He found one with beautiful ankles. She was sitting alone and had not come to him. She smiled softly, and the candlelight fell across the flesh of her bare shoulders. . . .

"Let's go to the Stockade," Mariane said.

"It is impossible," Santos said. "It is not done. Women of high class do not go there."

"Oh, come on," she said. Let's have fun, huh? This is our anniversary."

"Well, all right," Garver said nonchalantly. "I don't give damn about it, but if Mariane wants to go, let's go. You're a city official, Juan. We'll be safe."

As they walked out of the bar, Garver's heart was beating very fast.

It was dusk when they arrived. There was no breeze. The neon lights of the bars were blinking on as Juan parked his car, and girls in evening dresses and high-heeled shoes were walking into the purple stucco building. Santos called to a policeman in a khaki uniform with a large holster strapped to his leg. He pointed to the car and the policeman saluted. Police roamed the streets in pairs. Garver reeled against the fender.

Santos took each of them by the arm and led them into the Plaza Bar. They passed through a long room with a trestle bar on one wall and chairs against the other. A half-dozen of the less attractive girls sat on the chairs waiting for early prizes. Santos led Garver and Mariane through a door out onto a patio. It was a concrete dance floor ringed by orange and green tables. Japanese lanterns swung overhead. Above the patio on four sides was a balcony onto which opened the doors of many bedrooms, each door covered by a thin curtain. Garver saw shadows moving behind the curtains. There were a few girls at the tables. The yellow light from the Japanese lanterns glinted on their black hair. A waiter came and bowed respectfully to Santos. The orchestra began to play from a platform behind the outdoor bar. Santos ordered rum.

"This is something," Garver said, crossing his legs. More girls were coming in. He tried to control his breathing. He had never seen such beautiful girls. Most of them appeared to be in their teens. Their most common feature, he noted, was trim ankles.

Santos danced with Mariane. There were several couples dancing as the orchestra played American ballads. In the corner a boy, obviously a university student from the United States, was kissing one of the girls. She sat in his lap with her legs around him and her skirt carelessly high. Garver drank off half a glass of rum and his eyes had trouble focusing.

They left the Plaza Bar and went to the Zulu Club. Garver was getting very drunk.

Inside the Zulu, lights whirled like pinwheels in Garver's brain. The girls all wore white evening dresses that glowed in the darkness. Garver collapsed into a chair, staring with a hunger he could no longer hide. He had never been so tortured by desire. He nodded vaguely as Mariane and Santos went to dance. He watched them as they maneuvered easily around the small dance floor. And then he felt fingers massaging his neck and felt warm flesh touching his ear.

She was small and young, not more than 20. She was an Indian with high cheekbones, glittering eyes and straight black hair. The white dress was molded tightly to her muscled, high-breasted body. She bent forward, allowing the dress to fall away tantalizingly. A piece of silver jewelry on a fine chain swung in a short arc out from her throat. "You buy me a drink?" she said.

"No," Garver said, looking around apprehensively. "I can't."

She walked behind Garver and put

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her arms around him, pulling his head back against her stomach. She kissed him on the forehead. Her lips were wet, and the kiss made Garver tremble. "Please, baby, you come to the room with me? I like you very much."

Garver pulled her hands away. She looked down, laughing as he held her wrists. "I can't, damn it," he said. "Leave me alone."

"Baby, I am in the last room in the back," the girl said. "I'll wait for you. Do not be long."

Garver watched her walk away, swinging her hips proudly. She looked back over her shoulder as she disappeared into the passageway. He rubbed his palms against his eyes, and his hands shook. He saw himself in the room alone with her . . .

Mariane and Santos came back to the table. "I saw your friend," Mariane said. "She was cute."

"I told her to go away," Garver said.

"It's a shame," Mariane said. She had been holding Santos' hand, but now she released it. "If you boys will excuse me, I'm going to find the powder room."

Garver took a swig of rum. Mariane walked slowly, as if afraid of falling, and vanished through a side door. Santos was toying with his silver cigarette lighter. Garver looked at the lighter and it reminded him of the bright silver pendant on the dark throat of the Indian girl. "Say, Juan, I was wondering . . ." Garver paused.

"Yes?" Santos said. His wide brown eyes regarded Garver curiously. Santos seemed cold sober.

"Well, what I mean is this," Garver said. "Could you keep Mariane occupied for a few minutes? I mean, I'm going to slip away for a few minutes. You know what I mean?"

Santos smiled. "Ah, yes. the girls are very beautiful."

Garver felt himself blushing. "Yeah. Well, listen, when she gets back, tell her I've gone to the bathroom. Tell her I was a little sick or something. You know? It won't take long."

Garver stood up and knocked over his chair. It clattered onto the concrete floor. "Excuse me," he said loudly. Without looking at Santos again, he walked unsteadily down the passageway, wondering if he really intended to go through with it, almost hoping that the Indian girl would not be waiting. Light filtered through the curtains of the last room down the hall. He knocked on the door frame.

She pushed aside the curtain and smiled. "Come in," she said.

Garver blindly walked in. It was a small room, barely large enough for the iron bed, wash basin and clothes rack. The room smelled like fried bacon. The lone window, which looked into the alley, was covered by a torn curtain. She went to the bed and sat down, patting the sheet. "Sit beside me," she said.

Garver obeyed. She undid his tie. She pressed herself against him and her hair got into his mouth. It tasted oily. She sighed and began to kiss him.

"Baby, we make like we are in love," she said. She stood up and reached down for the hem of her dress. Garver blinked and shook his head: the rum was wearing off. When he looked up, she was nude. She sat down on the bed next to him and reached for him.

Garver stiffened. He pushed her away and stood up. "I can't do this," he said. He stumbled toward the door.

"Where are you going?" she asked, surprised.

"I've got a wife and two kids," Gar-

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ver said.

"I do not understand," she said.

"What has that got to do with love?"

She laughed and shook her head. Her black hair flowed around her dark, pretty face and shoulders. She pointed at Garver with her bare right foot. "Baby," she said, biting her lip and pouting.

His picture wouldn't come. He was still Garver Wheatley, standing in the doorway of a prostitute's room, drunk and confused. Mariane would be back at the table by now. Garver hesitated. Then he began to see it . . . He had just returned from political exile to lead the new revolution. He had been in the country only a few hours. In his left armpit he felt the reassuring bulge of the shoulder holster. The Indian girl beckoned to him. She had risked her life spying for him. He owed her at least this much. Garver walked toward her.

"Carmen," he said . . .

"My name is Lupe," she said. "Turn off the lights. People can see in from the alley."

When he came out of the room, he heard voices in the passageway. He almost collided with three men. "Pardon," Garver mumbled. It was the three soldiers from the dining room. The corporal cursed and drew back his fist. Garver tried to push him out of the way, but the blow struck him high on the cheek. It made an odd splat, like an egg dropped on the sidewalk, and slammed him against the wall. He walked down the passage, his cheek stinging, and grinned. He could tell Mariane he had been attacked.

The table was empty.

A waiter was stacking the rum

glasses on a tray. Garver looked at the table in disbelief, as if expecting Santos and Mariane to materialize. The orchestra played a ballad in a jazz tempo that banged against the inside of Garver's head and made it hard for him to think.

The waiter smirked at Garver. "They said they would meet you later," he said.

The truth hit Garver like a pain in the chest. *The double standard.* He had been tricked into going to the Indian girl's room. Santos had probably hired the girl. And Mariane had taken Santos back to the hotel.

He ran out of the Zulu Club. Santos' car was gone.

He shouted to a policeman. "Can I get a taxi?"

"Okay, señor," the policeman grinned. "I go call one."

When the taxi finally arrived, Garver jumped in and gave the address of the hotel. The policeman waved. Garver watched the lights of the Stockade fading behind him as dust boiled up from the road. He was certain he would find them in the room. What would he do? *He strode in. Ignoring Mariane, he strode up to Santos, who was known to be the deadliest pistol shot in Mexico. Garver slapped the Mexican's face. "Pistols," Garver said crisply. "At dawn." "Santos will kill you. Don't do it." Mariane screamed. "I think not," Garver replied. She had forgotten that he was the best pistol shot in the Marine Corps. There was that day on Bougainville when twenty-three Japanese. . . .* Garver put his hands over his eyes. The picture was no good.

He paid the cab driver and walked through the lobby of the hotel, across the patio and up the steps to the room. He walked slowly. He didn't want to go to the room. He didn't want to find them there together. No mental picture would cover the situation. He was afraid. The door to the room was locked. Almost timidly, Garver knocked.

"Who is it?" Mariane said.

"It's me." After a pause Mariane opened the door. She wore a pink negligée and her ponytail was undone. She had a hair brush in her hand and fresh lipstick on her mouth. She stepped back as Garver entered, and then closed the door.

"Where is he?" Garver asked.

"Who?" she said.

"You know who."

"You mean Santos? He dropped me off at the hotel and then went home. I felt terrible all of a sudden and I couldn't wait for you. You were gone a long time, darling."

"He wasn't up here?" Garver asked, suddenly feeling foolish.

"Did you think he would be?" Mariane said. She sat down at the dressing table and began brushing her hair. Through the negligée, Garver could see the curve of her back, ending in the fullness of her hips.

"All that double standard talk," Garver said weakly, sinking down on the bed.

"What have you been doing?" Mariane asked.

"Nothing," Garver said. He remembered the Indian girl, and he was flooded with guilt. He lay back and closed his eyes. He was very tired.

Mariane looked at him in the mirror. Beyond him, her clothes were strewn carelessly across a chair. She looked contentedly at her reflection and lit a cigarette with a silver lighter. Languidly, she began to brush her hair, counting the strokes and smiling. ★ THE END

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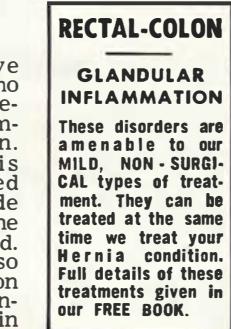
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continued from page 43

peace officer, this was all he had to show for it. Yes, he thought, but don't forget the eight dead men—no, it's nine, now. He wondered why he had stayed with this kind of work; it certainly wasn't the money. Turning, he caught the boy studying him again. And this, too, he said bleakly to himself.

That afternoon Matt and the boy packed groceries from the store and stowed them away in the new kitchen. He put a pot of beans on the stove, threw in a piece of bacon rind, and told the boy to keep water in the pot while he took care of some business in town.

He deposited Luke's \$175 in the bank. Just as he was leaving, Jake came out of his office and called to him. Turning, he followed the big man back inside.

Morgan waited until he was seated, passed a box of cigars, and, after they had lit up, said, "I've found someone to take the boy, Matthew."

"Who?"

"Adolph Tassel and his wife. They've wanted a child for years."

"Too old," Matt said bluntly. "The boy should be around a younger man. Besides, I don't like Adolph's temper—a man that will beat a horse with a singletree over nothing, will beat a boy. No, I don't think so, Jake."

Pinpoints of anger showed in Morgan's eyes. "By God, but you're particular, Matthew! You'll never get rid of the youngster that way!"

"I'm not trying to get rid of him," Matt said curtly, "I want to know that whoever takes him, will treat him right. Sorry, Jake, but that's the way I see it." Standing up, he turned and walked out.

He had missed going to the doctor's in the morning, so now he turned west on Fremont and went to Jensen's office to have the bandage changed on his leg.

He came out of the doctor's office and was standing on the boardwalk in front of Chin Lee's laundry talking to Mead, when they heard a shot over on the edge of town. Mead turned to go, but Matt said, "Sounds like it came from out my way—I'll take care of it, Mead." Crossing the street, he untied his horse from the hitch-rail in front of the bank and stepped into the saddle.

As he passed Johnson's bakery, there was another shot—then a third. He kicked his horse into a run. Abreast of Dobie Street, the fourth and fifth shots sounded. The premonition he'd had was verified as he turned the sorrel down the lane to his house: The boy was standing in the yard, both hands clutching the butt of Matt's spare revolver. As Matt pulled his horse to a halt, Luke raised the gun and shot out another upstairs window. The boy lowered the pistol, and spun around.

"That make you feel better?" Matt asked softly. He tied his horse to the top rail of the veranda. "Here," he said, drawing his pistol from its holster, "there's a few windows left if you're still in the mood."

Luke looked at the weapon in Matt's hand, but slowly shook his head. Matt holstered the pistol and held out a hand for the one Luke held. "I don't like it when a man uses one of my guns without asking. Come on," he said, and stepped onto the veranda. When he opened the front door, he could smell the acrid odor of burned beans. Inside the hall he turned to Luke. "Seems like the beans burned, somehow. Guess

I should have come back sooner to have a look at them."

He took Luke back down to the Buffalo House for supper. When he offered the boy a hand to help him up behind the saddle, Luke just looked at him in a solemn way, shook his head, and walked along behind the mare. Matt tried once or twice during the meal to find something that would strike a spark of interest in a 12-year-old boy, but there was no response. Luke would answer direct questions politely, with the gruffness of a boy raised in the saddle, but he wouldn't venture a single additional word.

Maybe it would be best to send Luke over to Adolph and his wife, Matt thought. Verna would be sure to hit the ceiling when she heard about the windows.

When they got outside again, Matt mounted and leaned over once more to offer the boy a hand up, but again he refused. They made a lonely picture, the young boy trudging slowly through the dust after the solemn rider.

When they got back to the house on Dobie Street, Matt dismounted, tied his horse, turned to Luke and said, "Boy, you'd better go pack your things in your war-bag. I'm taking you out to your new home." For a moment a look of surprise and hurt appeared in Luke's eyes. But he turned away and walked into the house without a word.

CLIMAX

April Issue
on sale February 26th

Adolph and his wife lived six miles outside Buffalo Bend, so Luke had to ride up behind Matt. When they got there and dismounted, Matt handed the boy the bank book and said, "Here's the money the hands in your Daddy's outfit raised for you. It's yours, and you don't have to tell these folks about it unless you want to. If you hang onto it, in a few years you can do what you want, go where you want—California, if you've a mind to. Anyways, with a stake, a young man don't have to be just a cowpoke—or a marshal."

The look in young Luke's eyes was mute and appealing, like a puppy, but Matt couldn't see it in the gathering dusk. He strode up on the porch and knocked on Adolph's door.

On the way back to town, he was plagued with the thought that maybe he could have done something with the boy if he'd kept him a few more days. Fremont Street was filled with trail hands and their laughter and shouts filled the night air. As he rode past Annie's, he heard drunken laughter and knew that he would earn his money tonight. When he relieved Mead, the day deputy lingered a long moment in the doorway, to say, "One of the Rafter L outriders was in town this afternoon—the herd will be here in a couple of days. Maybe you ought to get married tomorrow and leave for Tamalpais. I can handle it here; I'll get George Ash to help me out while you're gone."

Matt's lips curved in a small smile. Mead's concern was obvious. The year before, Matt had disarmed Jess Holden,

the troublesome trail boss for the Rafter L, and tossed him into jail for the night. Holden had left town the next day, his Texas pride bitterly hurt, swearing that he would settle with Matt the next time he came to Buffalo Bend.

"Thanks, Mead," he said, "but you know me better than that."

"You put too much emphasis on pride, Matt," the older man said reprovingly, and went off into the night.

On Thursday, Matt was replacing the broken panes when Verna came down the lane carrying a basket. She said nothing about the windows, and while he finished the job, she did some work inside.

By mid-afternoon they had cleaned up the front yard and Verna was helping him set out young poplar shoots along each side of the lane. When they had worked up one side almost to the street, he stood up and straightened his back. Looking down the street, he saw the boy coming at a trot. He stuck his shovel into the ground and lit a fresh cigar as he watched the youngster. Verna looked up and followed his gaze. "Is that Luke?"

"Yeah . . . wonder what happened?"

The boy turned down the lane and stopped in front of them. He met Matt's eyes for a brief moment, then looked down at the ground and dug his bare foot into the loose soil. He wore the impassive look that Matt had noticed the first time he had seen him. There was a large bruise on his forehead above one eye.

"Tassel do that?" Matt asked, pointing to the bruise. The boy nodded and dug some more with his big toe. "It's a long walk into town from the Dutchman's place," Matt said, and turned to Verna. "We have some sandwiches left, don't we?" She gave him a long, searching look, then turned and took the boy inside.

Half an hour later, Adolph Tassel drove into the yard. He carefully wrapped the buggy reins around the brake handle and stepped down with the buggy whip still in his hand. "Dot's a mean boy, Marshal," he said, looking fiercely at the boy on the veranda. "He von't verk—and he tin-canned my dogs. I going to teach him a lesson."

Matt stepped in front of the big man, and said, "Keep away from him, Adolph."

Tassel stopped suddenly, seeming to consider the marshal for the first time. He started to raise the whip, then saw Matt's hand on his six-shooter. Turning, he climbed back into the buggy, wheeled it about, and went down the lane, whipping the matched bays cruelly and muttering to himself.

When he had gone, Verna left the boy on the veranda and walked down the steps and stood before him. "I suppose this means that you plan on keeping him now," she said accusingly.

"Would you have me send him back to that sort of man?"

"No," she said, "but you can find someone else who's suitable."

"No, I owe the boy more than that. I shouldn't have given up so easily in the first place. He can stay here as long as he likes."

She straightened her shoulders and looked at him squarely. "All right, Matthew," she said, speaking very carefully, "but I'm going into town now and I'm going to make arrangements to postpone the wedding for a week. I'll give some excuse. And if this thing isn't solved by then, I'm going to postpone it another week—and another, if I have to. Maybe after a while people will just forget about it." She walked

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off down Dobie Street very slowly.

Turning to the veranda, Matt saw the gray eyes of the boy silently watching him. "Come on down here, Luke," he said gently. "we've got to get some water on these trees before they die."

He didn't feel like going into town to eat, so he fried bacon and eggs and he and the boy ate in silence. After they had washed dishes, Matt was just lighting up his cigar when he heard gunfire from town. He didn't think much about it, for the trail hands were always shooting their pistols in the air.

Fifteen minutes later Jim Neilsen, the stable roustabout, knocked on the front door and burst in, white-faced. "Jess Holden and two of his men just killed Mead in the Frontier Saloon!"

Matt sat a long moment in silence. So, here it was, again. Matt buckled on his gun as Neilsen told him what had happened.

"Jess and two of his boys hit town about three this afternoon and started on the booze. They kept talking about what they were going to do to you. They wouldn't check their guns with Andy at the Frontier, so he sent word to Mead. When Mead came to disarm them, they drew on him as he stepped through the doors—he didn't have a chance."

Matt nodded absently. "It's me they want—Mead just happened to step in at the wrong time. Thanks, Jim," he said and watched the lanky youth leave. Standing up, he pulled the .44 from his holster, checked it and dropped it back. At the doorway, he turned to the boy. "Always meet your troubles head on and do the best you can."

He went along Fremont, knowing that killing Mead would have sobered

them and they would be twice as dangerous. Doc Jensen was standing in front of the Buffalo House. "The tall blond one is waiting in the false doorway of Smith's," he said. "Holden and the other one are farther up, but I'm not sure just where."

Matt nodded briefly and went on.

Ahead, he saw Verna standing with her father in front of the bank: he stepped from the boardwalk and went obliquely across the street so that he would miss them. He heard Verna calling his name, but he kept on walking. As he came near Smith's Hardware Store, he drew his pistol and cocked it, keeping flat against the wall. He was still out of sight of the man in the doorway, and just before he rounded the front of the window, he stopped.

"Move out of there, Whitey!" he said.

There was dead silence for a moment, then the man ran out, shooting as he came. Matt shot him squarely in the chest and watched him sprawl in the dirt. A gun opened up in the alley between Denton's Mercantile and the real estate office, knocking a window out behind him. He moved for the protection of the doorway, but a bullet from across the street caught him in the left shoulder and knocked him sideways. As he fell, he rolled and came to rest on his belly, looking for the man who had shot him. He spotted him standing behind the batwing doors of the Trail Hand's Saloon. Raising his pistol, Matt shot twice, knowing as he did so, that the man in the alley would get him. As the man across the street fell through the doors onto the boardwalk, a single shot sounded from the alley.

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Matt wheeled, wondering why he was still alive. As he covered the entrance of the alley with his gun, Luke stepped out. In his hand was Matt's spare pistol.

He heard Verna's voice calling his name as she came running across Fremont.

"Are you all right, Matthew?" she asked, and he admired the calmness of her voice.

"Yes," he said, and got slowly to his feet, his right hand clamped tightly to his left shoulder. He felt sick at his stomach for a moment and the world reeled. She helped him to the boardwalk and he sat down, feeling better.

Looking up, he saw the boy standing silently at the edge of the crowd, the serious gray eyes watching him steadily as Doc Jensen came on the run.

Verna studied the quiet face of the boy. "Luke," she said, "you're going to have to start talking, if a person's

to get to know you." A cautious smile appeared on Luke's face. "Come on, now," she said, "give me a hand to get your father into the Doctor's office. No sense letting strangers do it when he's got a wife and a son." Luke stuffed the pistol into his belt and jumped to Matt's side, his freckled face tight to keep back the tears.

Inside, when they had him on the table, Matt smiled up at Verna. "Now, stop worryin' and take that look off your face. I'll be all right. And you got a man to take care of you while I'm mending."

Verna smiled. "I guess we'd better get married real quick, Matt," she said. "It wouldn't do in Buffalo Bend to have a son before I had a husband. But then," and she put her arm around Luke's shoulders, "if I didn't have a son first, I never would have had a husband."

★ THE END

Leak In Project Emily

continued from page 19

went to the viewer. She looked at only a few and shut off the machine. Her eyes narrowed. "Where did you get this film?"

I told her about Mitchell, the camera, the whole story. What difference would it make? "Mitchell left me his number, Joan. I have to call him."

She stood up. "Hal, I'll do anything to keep you from making the call."

"Anything, Joan?"

"Anything," she repeated, her eyes steady on mine.

I took a deep breath. What the hell, I thought, she tried to use me. "All right, you have a choice, Joan."

She came over and put both arms around my neck and pressed her red lips against mine. I felt no guilt in what I was doing. When she made the decision to sell out her country, she had lost all right to respect and consideration.

Afterward, I left her in the bedroom with a cigarette and a glass of brandy, and went to the telephone. I had dialed two numerals when I heard Joan's voice behind me. "You made a bargain," she whispered tensely.

"That's right, Joan," I said, facing her. "I'm breaking faith with you just as you broke faith with the country. You've got it coming." Then I turned my back on her.

That was my big mistake. The gun muzzle dug deeply into my back. "Hang up the phone, Hal," she ordered. "Quick!" The sound of her voice matched the feel of the gun. I hung up and wheeled around, ignoring the threat of the gun.

"You won't get the film," I said.

She hesitated. I could almost see the wheels spinning behind the blue eyes. "I'm taking that film out of here, Hal. Do I have to shoot you first?"

Her icy tone told me she meant it. I took the film from the machine and held it out.

"Throw it," she said. I tossed the film at her and as she grabbed for it, the muzzle of the gun dipped momentarily. I lunged for her, but she was too fast for me. The gun came slamming across my jaw, sending ribbons of pain along my face and into the nerves behind my eyes. The last thing I remembered was the fire in her eyes as the metal barrel crashed into my face again.

The buzzing of the telephone directly overhead was like a swarm of angry bees. I opened my eyes, but the phone rang four more times before I managed to lift it out of the cradle. It was Agnes

Johnson, and she was hysterical. Ronnie had been at her place, she said, and threatened her. He had left early and she followed him. He parked his car outside Joan's apartment and waited near the entrance until Joan arrived. They spoke for a few minutes, and then they quarreled. He hit Joan and Agnes screamed. "Then he came over and hit me," she cried.

"Where is he now, Agnes?" I asked.

"He was going to the plant to get some films Joan hid there."

I hung up on her and phoned Mitchell, and told him to get himself over to the main engineering building. He wanted an explanation but I ignored him. "I'll be near the vault," I said, and hung up.

To enter the plant grounds at night, you must show your badge at the main guard station and sign the night register. Agnes wasn't lying; Ronnie had signed in ten minutes before me.

The building was quiet, semi-dark with the night lighting. I moved through the long corridors to the drafting area, passing Ronnie's office. It was dark. I continued along an aisle until I reached the order counter in the reproduction room. I could see that the vault door was ajar, so I ducked down behind the counter to wait him out.

The noises inside the vault indicated he was searching for something. His appearance in a couple of minutes told me he'd found it. "Hello, Ronnie," I said, and he damn near jumped out of his shoes.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"Waiting for you."

"Any particular reason?"

"I know about you and Joan, and so does the FBI. I know you came back to get the latest sketches on Emily."

"This is pretty funny, Hal. I've been suspicious of you since you gave me that big story about Washington. Now you claim you're suspicious of me." He dipped into his pocket and came out with a roll of film. "Here it is, but it's not going to indict me or Joan."

A voice behind me snapped, "I'll take it!" I don't know how long Mitchell had been standing at the doorway, listening. But now he advanced on Ronnie, gun in hand. "The film," he said.

"Just as Agnes described you," Ronnie said, backing away from the gun. "This is our man, Hal. Here's our leak in Project Emily."

Ronnie must be mad, I thought. Mitchell was FBI. I watched, fascinated, as Ronnie refused to give up the film. Then Mitchell began to pound him with the gun, beating him down to the floor.

Something was wrong. The FBI isn't the Russian secret police, and I suddenly realized I didn't know a thing about Mitchell. I was between one of the massive white printers and a work table. A 15-inch length of unfinished dural casting lay on the table; the girls used it to hold down prints.

"Stop it, Mitchell!" I yelled, raising the weight in my right hand.

Mitchell whirled and turned the gun on me. "Drop it, Meyers! It won't do you any good."

He had me cold. Ronnie was unconscious and no one else was around. Mitchell's eyes had the flat look of death. He smiled thinly and tightened his finger on the trigger. "You know too much, Meyers."

I flung the casting, and at the same time jerked my body to one side. The room exploded with sound: the blast of the revolver, the whine of the bullet through my shirt, and Mitchell's scream of pain as the casting shattered his arm.

"Give me the film," I ordered.

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"Go to hell!" he said, jumping to his feet and running from the room. I caught up with him when he was halfway through the men's room door. I tackled him hard and he dropped in a heap.

Sturgis Case pulled me off Mitchell, and a couple of other men got him on his feet. For a few minutes there was a lot of activity, then Case took my arm and we headed across the courtway between buildings.

"This guy Mitchell has given you quite a run for your money. Joan tells me." Case took the film from my hand, looked at it and tossed it back. "The film's phony, but we'll keep it as evidence. We had fake drawings made up and Joan shot them at our direction."

"Joan's been helping you all along?"

"Joan opened the case. She was the one who brought me the film I showed you at our first meeting. This Mitchell had met her through a friend, and when he offered her a deal, she pretended to go along with it. He said he represented a South American country, a friendly one, that was trying to get its own missile program off the ground. So there was really nothing wrong in borrowing a few ideas for the guidance system. The friend wasn't very bright and went for his story."

"Who was the friend?" I asked.

"Agnes Johnson. We picked her up tonight after Ronnie called. She's been under house surveillance for twenty-four hours."

"Agnes phoned me tonight, with a story about Ronnie and Joan."

"I know. It wasn't true. She was hysterical and hoped you'd kill Ronnie. He'd found out about her part in this."

"If Joan opened the case, why did you want her watched?"

"Actually, I wanted her to watch you." Case clapped me on the shoulder. "Dirty trick, huh? But when we started, we weren't sure of you or anybody."

We passed through the guard station and headed toward Case's car. "What a dope I've been," I said. "Mitchell had me suspecting Ronnie and Joan, too. And Joan let me believe it."

"She had no choice, Meyers. Under no circumstances was she to let anyone know she was playing a double role. Then Mitchell got suspicious of Joan and had you plant that camera to find out if she was substituting fake drawings for the ones Agnes had carefully laid aside. Joan really had to act fast to prevent you from turning the film over to Mitchell."

"Fast and effective," I muttered.

"If Mitchell had gotten the film, he would have known we were onto him and moved out fast." Sturgis Case opened the door of his car.

Joan was in the back seat. "You ride with me," she said, and pushed open the rear door. As I sat beside her, she put her fingers to the lump on my jaw. "I'm real sorry about this, Hal."

"I've got some things to be sorry for, too," I told her.

She moved closer to me. "You forgot, I had a choice."

"Not the way Case tells it."

"I could have shot you." She put her hand in mine. "Take me somewhere for a drink, Hal."

For the first time in hours I began to feel like myself. "We'll have to shake Case first. He's got some questions."

She kissed me lightly and whispered, "The FBI doesn't need to know all the facts do they?"

"That's for sure," I said, putting my arm around her. "But I do." * THE END 93

I Remember Babe Ruth

continued from page 55

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everyone in the park was certain that ball would clear the fence for a homer, including the guy on second base who started jubilantly for third and home. His jaw dropped six inches when the Babe suddenly looked up, ran forward about five strides and caught the ball. The runner was a dead duck for a quick throw to second and a double play.

The Babe never could remember names, and the strangest part of it was that it bothered him a lot. If there was one thing he prided himself on, it was his friendliness. He felt that failing to recall a name was an insult, but he couldn't help it. He called everybody "doc" or "keed," according to whether you were over or under 40. His wife would admonish him about it repeatedly, but it would do no good.

I always felt deeply flattered because he had a special name for me. He always called me Joe; it started one evening in a St. Louis speakeasy where we were having a few beers. "You know," he told me, "it beats me the way I forget names. It's just sloppiness, that's all. Hell, I can remember plays I made years ago, and I remember every damn ball a pitcher throws at me. But it can get damn embarrassing to forget names. You know, on our last trip here, a guy I'd known for ten years came in to relieve. But when the fans in the stands asked me, 'Hey, Babe, who's that guy coming in?' I had to holler to what's-his-name in center field to find out who it was. But I think I'm getting better, Joe."

I almost strangled on the home brew.

"Now what's the matter?" he growled. "Don't tell me I got your name wrong."

"Not at all, Babe, not at all," I said. "That's me—Joe." So from that day on, I was Joe to the Babe.

The last time I saw Babe was in St. Louis, shortly before he died. He was on a tour sponsored by the Ford Motor Company in connection with promoting the American Legion junior baseball program. They presented him a trophy at Sportsman's Park. I didn't get to talk to him at the park, but we met back at the hotel. His drawn face lit up as he spotted me, and he said in a hoarse whisper, "Hello, Joe, you old sonofabitch." So I was Joe to the last.

There was great speculation as to whether or not the Babe was fully aware of the seriousness of his illness. From my brief talk with him on that occasion, I had a feeling he knew all the time. I had just made the usual inane, meaningless remarks one always makes when face to face with an old friend whose days are numbered.

"Well, you're looking pretty good, George," I said. I always liked to call him George. "How do you feel?" I asked.

"Pretty lousy, Joe. It won't be long now." With that he went into the elevator, leaving me with a lump in my throat. I never saw him alive again.

Money meant nothing to the Babe in his earlier days, except as something you tossed around to have fun. When his 1922-1926 contract, which paid him \$52,000 a year, expired, he didn't have a nickel in the bank. During his next three years with the Yanks, at \$70,000 a year, and the following two years at \$80,000, Colonel Ruppert, Ed Barrow and general manager Christy Walsh prevailed upon Ruth to put himself on a strict allowance and stow away the bulk of his vast earnings into annu-

ties. That move enabled the Babe to live out his later years in comfort.

However, both before and after his reformation, the Babe always was able to drive a sharp bargain. Those spring salary wars he used to have with Colonel Ruppert in St. Petersburg were strictly on the level. "Well, boys," the Babe would say, "I'm having another go with Jake tomorrow. Wait'll you hear him squeal." And Ruppert would howl, but he would enjoy every minute of it. The colonel always gave in, and being a proud man, he took great satisfaction from the fact that he not only owned baseball's greatest star, but paid him the game's highest salary.

I remember Babe telling me one day about an extraordinary financial tiff he'd had with a motion picture concern. It was in connection with the filming of the Lou Gehrig picture in which Ruth was to appear. Lou already had died and Gary Cooper was to play the leading role in the picture. There was an elaborate cocktail party in New York to launch the publicity drive. After the party, the Babe invited me up to his Riverside Drive apartment for some sandwiches and beer. After a while, we got to talking about the forthcoming picture.

"You want to hear something funny?" he said. "I don't even know yet whether I'm gonna be in the picture."

That startled me and I asked how come.

"Well, they signed me to a contract, for \$25,000. But a couple of days ago, a guy came around to see me. He hemmed and hawed a while, then asks me if I'd take less if I didn't appear in the picture. Somebody else would play me."

"So I just looked at him and said, 'Let's get this straight. You're already paying one guy to play Gehrig, who's dead. Now you want to pay another guy to play me, who's still alive. I'd say that's a helluva way to make a picture, but that's none of my business. But get this straight—whether I play in the picture or not, I'm getting my \$25,000."

The Babe did appear in the picture, and a lot of people think he saved it.

The Babe loved to play poker, and whether the stakes were large or small, he always played it the same way. He would laugh gleefully when he won, and roar like a lion when he lost. It wasn't the loss of the money that hurt just the loss of pride.

We writers were always anxious to play, although at times the game would take a rough turn for our thinner wallets. Not that the Babe ever took advantage of the fact that he had more money than we had to drive us out with reckless raises. In our modest games of five-card stud, with a 25-cent limit on each draw, the Babe would never drop out. He would always stick in there, trying to outdraw us on the fifth card. Now and then he would have a lucky night and murder us. But generally the law of averages took good care of us.

Once, on an evening train out of Washington, he had a particularly tough session that put him out of sorts for a time. Finishing dinner with Mrs. Ruth in his drawing room, he came up to join us in a game in a compartment. Very soon, we had him hooked for about 15 bucks. Then the porter stuck his head in the door. "Mrs. Ruth would like to see you," he told Babe. "What's the matter?" the Babe grumbled. "I left her with money to pay the check."

I gave her a twenty-dollar bill. Don't tell me that didn't cover the dinner."

"That's just it, Mister Ruth. That bill ain't no good. It's counterfeit." The Ruthian explosion that followed all but blew the train off the tracks.

Perhaps his most eventful siege of poker playing came in the spring of 1926, when the Yankees and Dodgers teamed up on an exhibition tour. From St. Petersburg, Fla., clear into Brooklyn's Ebbets Field, the Yanks walloped the Dodgers in every game. Several years later, the Babe was shooting the breeze with some of the boys, when somebody asked, "Hey, Babe, do you remember that trip north you made with the Dodgers?"

"Hell, man, I'll never forget it," the Babe replied. "Every day we beat their brains out on the ball field and every night they took our dough on the train."

The Babe loved crowds and never tired of milling with them. The Yankee's famous trip through Texas in 1929 was a riot. Houston, San Antonio, Waco, Dallas, Fort Worth, everywhere they went, it was the same story; the parks jammed to overflowing. Babe enjoyed every minute of it and I can't remember ever seeing him refuse to give an autograph. Yet he couldn't understand anyone being silly enough to chase a man for his signature.

But he never turned down a request for his signature, or for anything else. Tales of his visits to hospitals are legion. One that I don't think has been told before happened on a spring trip, when the Yanks stopped in Nashville. One of the writers asked the Babe to visit an uncle who was dying of tuberculosis. The scribe's uncle, an old gentleman and a devout baseball fan, was completely overwhelmed.

On the way out, as we stood waiting for the elevator, Babe spotted a stairway and headed for it. On the first landing with no one around him, he stopped and his shoulders began to heave. The writers scrambled down to see what was the matter. The big fellow was crying uncontrollably.

"God, that was awful," he sobbed. "Did you see that poor old guy dying up there? That could be me or you!"

It seemed as though Babe was always going into or coming out of a hospital, either as a visitor or patient. They used to say of him, "He bruises easily but he heals miraculously."

He was forever baffling doctors. One night in his apartment, I saw him stuff himself with slabs of cold veal, dill pickles and Alophen pills, washing it all down with innumerable highballs. This was just before the filming of the Gehrig picture, and they had put the big fellow on a six weeks' diet to slim him down for the cameras. He was breaking training with a vengeance.

The next day, there were stories around town that Ruth had been rushed to a sanitarium. No one answered his phone at home. The following day, I finally got in touch with his doctor. The doctor said Babe had been in an auto accident the week before and that he thought Ruth was suffering from a nervous breakdown. When I asked the doctor whether part of the "breakdown" could have been brought on by a starving man's midnight raid on a side of veal, pickles, Alophen pills and highballs, the astounded physician exclaimed: "Good God, don't tell me he did all that!" When I assured him he did, the doctor thanked me and said, "This certainly changes the complexion of things."

Always exciting, always fascinating,

that was life with the Babe. He was a man of strange complexities. The offensive side of baseball, the most potent weapon of which was the home run, had won him fame and fortune. But it was the defensive side which intrigued him most. He had started out as a pitcher and that side of the game never left him. "All the science of baseball is in pitching," he used to say.

The first time he played in Cleveland's Municipal Stadium, he complained about all the ground he had to cover. That, of course, was before they put up the inner fence reducing the outfield. "It wrecks all the science there is in the game," he complained. "Pitchers here don't have to be anything more than throwers. They don't have to be smart and figure things out the way they do in parks like the Polo Grounds or Fenway Park."

The fact that Cleveland's vast outfield terrain also put an additional strain on the Babe's aging legs did not add to his opinion of the huge lake front arena. "Never ran so much and did so little in all my life," the Babe said after that first series. One of the shots he tracked down was an inside-the-park homer by Eddie Morgan that rolled to the center-field bleacher wall some 500 feet away. Morgan was the Indians' first-baseman and a bit of a playboy himself. "What a guy that feller is," the Babe said after the game. "In the next inning after he hit that homer, I got down to first. I said to him, listen, bub the next time, you hit a ball like that, pick out some spot in the park where I ain't. He said, 'What are you bellyaching about? I had to run that one out, too."

Ruth was bitter because he never got a chance to manage the Yankees in his later years. But I only heard him complain once. And, oddly, that was against the hot-tempered Larry MacPhail of the Brooklyn club. When Ruppert and Barrow ran the Yanks, they had given the excuse that Babe had refused to try out his managerial qualifications with a minor-league club. Ruth never denied that. But when MacPhail, who had brought Ruth briefly to Brooklyn as a coach, intimated the same thing, the Babe flared up. He called me on the phone and said: "Got a story for you, Joe. I hear MacPhail is going around saying I wouldn't manage in the minors for him. That just ain't so. The truth is I called him a couple of times and offered to take a job with one of the farm clubs. But he's given me the runaround ever since."

What followed is the strangest part of all. Normally, if anyone called MacPhail a liar, the redhead went into a towering rage. But in this instance, Larry held his temper with surprising restraint. "There seems to be some misunderstanding here," he said, "and I'm sorry. I certainly do not intend to get into any dispute with a man of Babe Ruth's tremendous stature."

On the day of his funeral, Joe DiMaggio and I flew up from Washington to attend the services in St. Patrick's Cathedral. We had been named as honorary pallbearers, and at the close of the services, we lined up on opposite side of the cathedral steps. A thunder shower was coming on and it was hot and stuffy. Next to me stood two of the Babe's old Yankee teammates, Joe Dugan and Waite Hoyt.

As the casket neared us, Dugan said in a low voice, "I'd give my right arm for a cold beer."

"So would the Babe," Hoyt said.

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