THE saint DETECTIVE MAGAZINE

NOV.
35c

Edited by LESLIE CHARTERIS

The Resurrection of Father Brown
by G. K. CHESTERTON

The Impeccable Mr. Devereux
by LOUIS GOLDING

A Man Named Smith
by LAWRENCE TREAT

Toast to Victory
by LAWRENCE G. BLOCHMAN

The Man Who Liked Toys
by LESLIE CHARTERIS

NO, NOT LIKE YESTERDAY

A new JOHN J. MALONE novelet by CRAIG RICE

SOME OLD, SOME NEW — THE FINEST IN MYSTERY FICTION

A NEWNES PUBLICATION

AMONG THE MANY READERS who admitted to being made merrier but wiser by our reprint of that old sack of popcorn entitled THE MAN WHO WAS CLEVER, one who signed herself *Just a Saint Fan* went on in part as follows:

> *While I'm at it, let me thank you for the very decent covers you always have on your magazine. I hope you never change it. I'm a decent gal myself, but like to read mysteries, but have had to give up many of them, as they make me ashamed to be caught looking at the cover, and the stories are getting filthier and filthier. I'm not the only one who feels that way, as I know people who object to these rotten stories and indecent covers. A mystery should be a mystery, not a sex orgy.*

But for her modest anonymity, this correspondent would have received a personal letter of thanks, with genuine autograph; and yet in some ways it's even more satisfactory to answer her in public.

One of the few things I've never been accused of personally, at one time or another, is being a prude; and I do not care who knows that I think sex was a much better invention than atomic bombs. But I couldn't agree more heartily that it doesn't belong in this type of story except as a skillful seasoning. The honorable craft of the crime story has enough uphill struggle already to earn the respect it deserves as legitimate literature, against the egghead prejudice of those who have somehow snobbishly convinced themselves that marital problems are a more intellectual theme than murder; it does not want the extra stigma of association with a school of writing which relies on perversion and pornography to conceal its paucity of invention and wit.

In line with our only policy in this magazine, we are happily starring this month another brand-new Craig Rice novelet, NO, NOT LIKE YESTERDAY, which begins with the inimitable and indestructible John J. Malone attending an old-time racketeer's funeral, and goes on from there.

Other old favorites, who need no introduction by now, are Lawrence G. Blochman and G. K. Chesterton (with Father Brown, of course).

And this month the newcomers we welcome to our book are the eminent Louis Golding (whose best-selling MR. EMMANUEL of pre-war days some of you must be old enough to remember), Will Oursler, Lawrence Treat, and our discovery of the month Allan Beekman, whose DOG SPIRIT is a novelty both in plot and setting which you simply must not miss.

And there's the usual Saint story, THE MAN WHO LIKED TOYS. All good clean fun, even with corpses.

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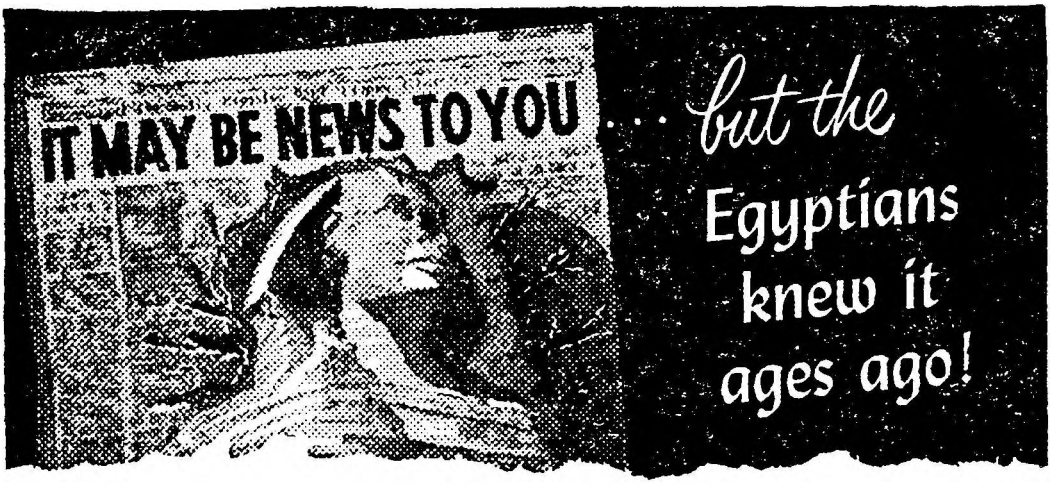

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no, not like yesterday

by . . . Craig Rice

Yes, those had been the days—when murder was so much less intellectual. . . .

BEHIND the big black hearse and the open convertibles banked with floral wreaths, the line of mourners' cars stretched for two miles, flanked by newsreel and television trucks, motorcycle police, and the reporters and photographers in press cars.

Up the broad avenue the procession moved at a pace that seemed, to Malone, a bit hasty for a funeral. Evidently the police detail which was leading the cortege up ahead had orders to get it done and over with as quickly as possible, before anything happened to mar the solemn obsequies.

For the city was alive with rumors. This was the first time in years an important gangland death had occurred, and the newspapers were giving it the full treatment. Not so much because of the status of the deceased, but because of potentially deadly differences of opinion over who was going to inherit his empire. GANG WAR MAY FLARE, 10 TOP HOODS MARKED FOR DEATH? and GUNS BARK

There'd been 27 cars with flowers at Big Jim's funeral. Why there'd been 19 cars with flowers at O'Banion's funeral. John J. Malone, honorary member of the Oblong Marching Society and a friend of many of the mourners, exchanged a nostalgic smile with Joe the Angel, who sat beside him in the big black limousine just behind the flowers, and agreed that it wasn't like old times.... Later, as murder seemed to "catch," he began to wonder if he'd been wrong.

AGAIN IN GANG FEUD were some of the page one headlines.

It was like old times again, the fellow mourner on John J. Malone's right remarked, and Malone nodded, and exchanged a nostalgic smile with Joe the Angel who sat beside him in the big black limousine rolling just behind the flowers and the chief mourners. Joe's cousin, Rico di Angelo, was the officiating mortician, which accounted for the up-front position of their car, a favor that was as eagerly coveted as a low-figure license plate or ringside seats at a heavyweight world championship bout. For the guest of honor was none other than Alvin (the Pike) Peake, one-time ward boss and racket king, reportedly in retirement and now making his first public appearance in years—and his last.

Not that John J. Malone would not have rated a high up-front position in the funeral cortege in any case, as a friend of the deceased and as an honorary member of the Oblong Marching Society. But Joe the Angel had seen to it that the little lawyer, his friend and chief patron of Joe the Angel's City Hall Bar, should ride up front as near to the head man of the parade as funeral etiquette permitted.

"It's like old times again," the man on Malone's right repeated with a sigh, and mopped his bald head with a black-bordered handkerchief. This was the tenth time he had said it since he slipped into the seat beside him when they left the funeral chapel, and for the tenth time Malone bowed his head reverently.

The man's face looked familiar. One wouldn't be likely to overlook that combination of bald head and bushy red eyebrows. But Malone had failed to catch his name and now, after the fifth helping from the bottle that Joe the Angel had thoughtfully brought along to assuage his grief and that of his fellow mourners, Malone wasn't even sure introductions had been exchanged at all. He was on the point of correcting this oversight when Joe the Angel broke in with the opinion that it really wasn't like old times.

"Big Jim, he had twenty-seven cars with flowers. O'Banion, nineteen cars with flowers. I count them myself. All the time, less and less." Joe the Angel shook his head sadly. "No, not like old times."

Malone glanced at the man on his right to see if there would be any argument coming to the contrary, but the stranger was looking glumly out the window, seemingly lost in thought. Anyway, Joe was right, he reflected. Even moving three abreast behind the hearse there couldn't have been more than twelve convertibles full of flowers, quite a come-down from the old days

when a gangster funeral resembled nothing so much as the Pasadena Festival of Roses followed by a Fourth of July parade, and gangland picked up the tab for fifty grand or more.

Even so, Alvin (the Pike) Peake was getting a send-off that a Senator might have envied. Bronze casket, silver handles, and a roster of honorary pallbearers that read like a combination of the City Hall Elevator Board and the FBI's Most Wanted list. The works, with television—something that the old days didn't have. It added to the glow of sweet nostalgia that Joe the Angel's medicinal offering had already given him to think how his old friend the Pike would have loved it. Especially the occasional ticker tape and baskets of waste paper that office workers were tossing from the windows, evidently under the impression that what was passing down below was a reception for a returning channel swimmer or a visiting foreign dignitary.

But arriving at the cemetery, Malone was again struck by the unceremonious haste with which the rites were being rushed to completion. The air seemed to be filled with tension, as if everybody on this hot day—the city was in the fourth day of a sweltering heat wave—expected a storm to break at any minute, not from the elements of nature but what the newspaper editorial writers like to call the "city's criminal elements"—a phrase that the little lawyer had once defined to a jury as anybody who failed to make the customary arrangements and connections before embarking on a life of border-line business ventures. Police were everywhere and plain-clothesmen mingled with the crowd, keeping a sharp eye on every bulge that might indicate concealed artillery. Malone spotted von Flanagan, of Homicide, and signalled to him.

"What goes on, von Flanagan?"

"You tell me," von Flanagan grunted. "These are your friends." His nerves seemed to be on edge too.

Malone moved a little closer and said, "I shouldn't tell you this, von Flanagan, but if you hear of anybody being murdered tonight with an African throwing spear, don't say I didn't warn you."

The big police officer grunted and moved off into the crowd. It was obvious that he was in no mood for chit-chat.

The unseemly haste finally resulted in everything getting tangled up with everything else. Pallbearers got lost and replacements had to be hastily recruited from the crowd, the hearse approached the grave wrong end to and had to be backed around, nearly running down half a dozen of the chief mourners. The

fife and drum corps of the Oblong Marching Society, which was supposed to give something like drum-roll military finish to the final rites—someone had discovered that the Pike had been a World War I vet—never did show up at the graveside and was found afterwards wandering disconsolately around the edge of the crowd, trying to collect its members.

In the scramble for the returning limousines, Malone ran into the stranger with the red eyebrows once more. He was going back to town with friends in their car, he explained, but could he have a word with Malone privately? He looked scared.

"I planned to talk to you on the way up in the car, that's why I slipped in with you. But too many people around. You see, Malone, I expect trouble—" He looked around him apprehensively. "If something should happen to me—"

Someone in the crowd yelled "Come on, Smitty, let's go!" and the man with the red eyebrows started. He had the look of a strayed housecat hearing an angry bark. "If anything should happen to me—" he began again, "Call Maywood 9—"

Again his friends called to him to come, and this time he broke off and ran back to them, disappearing in the crowd. But not before he had stuffed an envelope into Malone's coat pocket. When he got into the limousine Malone put his hand in his pocket and felt the envelope. It was sealed, but even through the paper he could detect the crisp feel of folding money. He decided not to open it in the presence of the oddly assorted strangers who had crowded into the car with him.

All during the uneventful but hurried ride back to town he worried about the stranger. Or was he a stranger? He did look familiar, but then, so did a lot of people. Most people, to Malone. He finally relegated the stranger to the classification of people he'd seen around somewhere, and waited until he was safely back in his office before opening the envelope. It contained ten crisp new hundred dollar bills.

Maggie, Malone's secretary, looked at the money and then looked across the desk at Malone.

"It's a retainer," Malone explained. "Deposit it. Break one first and bring it back in fives and tens. I've got a date tonight."

Maggie said "What is it for?"

Malone took a cigar from his pocket and went about the business of slipping off the cellophane wrapper slowly and methodically. He needed a little time to think this one over.

Finally he said "I told you. It's a retainer."

"Yes, but who's it from?"

"A client," Malone said unhappily. "A new client."

"What's his name?"

The little lawyer fished around in his pockets for a match.

"They're on the desk," Maggie said coldly. She handed them to him. "Now, what's his name? This new client?"

Malone said "I don't know."

Maggie eyed him suspiciously. "What do you mean, you don't know?"

Malone took a few long puffs on his cigar before replying, like a destroyer laying down a defensive smoke screen. "Well, in a way, I mean, I don't know. His name is Smitty and he lives in Maywood." He paused, looked at Maggie and saw that she wasn't satisfied either. "He's got red eyebrows," he added, as if that explained everything. "Bushy red eyebrows."

Maggie looked at him and said absolutely nothing. At last Malone picked up the money and replaced it in the envelope. "Oh, all right. Put this into the safe. It stays there until I know who it's from and what it's for." He sighed deeply. "There is such a thing as professional ethics."

He spent what was left of the day worrying about a purely personal problem, and was no closer to solving it early in the evening when he sat in Joe the Angel's City Hall Bar, watching Joe the Angel polish up some glasses while he reminisced sadly about the late departed, about funerals in general, about his cousin Rico's dismay at the way the cops had loused up this funeral, and how the big rush of business that always followed such funerals at his bar had failed to materialize, owing, he lamented, to the newspaper headlines which had thrown everybody into a panic and sent them scurrying for cover. And all because Alvin (the Pike) Peake had finally died, in a quiet gentlemanly way, of a ruptured appendix. Which only went to show the way things were these days.

Malone said nothing for a while. In spite of the fact that an appendix had done the job instead of a burst of machine-gun fire, the Pike had left a few heirs to his highly lucrative business operations who were bound to settle the estate the hard and noisy way. There was sound reasoning behind the newspaper headlines and the general disquiet in the atmosphere.

At last, to change the subject, Malone told Joe the Angel about the stranger in the limousine—he and Joe the Angel had lost each other in the crowd—laying particular emphasis on the thousand dollar cash retainer.

Joe the Angel beamed. "That's just fine." He reached behind the cash register for a grimy slip of paper. "Seventeen dollars and forty-five cents, even. Okay, make it seventeen even. And your drinks today—on the house, account of the Pike's funeral."

Malone shook his head.

Joe the Angel said "Wat's a matter? You got a grand, no?"

"I got a grand, yes," Malone said. "but I can't touch it, not yet."

"What do you mean, you can't touch?"

Malone said, "I don't know who the client is, or what he's done, or if he even needs the services of a lawyer." He drew himself up with an impressive show of dignity. "There's such a thing as professional ethics." He waited to see what effect this noble sentiment would have on Joe the Angel. "There is one thing you can do for me," he said. "I've got a date tonight—"

Joe the Angel started automatically to shake his head. Then he said "The brunette with the blue sedan, or the blonde with the yellow sportscar?"

"It's a green convertible, lime green, and the lady's name is Dolly Dove. A double sawbuck ought to do it, just for the incidentals. I've always got credit at the *Chez.*"

Joe the Angel went on polishing his glasses, thinking things over.

Finally he went to the cash register, rang up *No Sale,* and handed over a twenty dollar bill. "The lady, what did you say her name is?"

"Dolly Dove," Malone said. "She's the mouse who invented a better man-trap and now everybody is beating a path to her door."

Credit having been established and everything on a friendly and firm footing again, Joe the Angel poured another rye and beer on the house. Then he went into the back room and returned a moment later with a huge bunch of flowers. "Rico saved them for me," he explained. He stripped off the *Rest In Peace* ribbons and handed the bouquet to Malone. "For the lady," he said gallantly.

Malone thanked him, went out and hailed a cab. The driver eyed the bouquet and grinned. "Where to, Malone?"

"Sherman Hotel," Malone said. "The Style Show."

He settled back on the cushions before the driver could think of any remarks about Malone's choice of destinations. No reason for explaining that Dolly Dove was appearing as a model at the show that was the feature of the testimonial dinner for Robert P. Swale, and also a benefit for one of the philanthropist's favorite charities.

He sent the flowers around backstage to Dolly Dove and sat down at the rear of the ballroom to wait. The style show was just ending, and he noticed happily that Dolly was making her exit gracefully in a one-piece bathing suit amid a round of applause. He looked around him and was struck at once by the number of

men standing around that nobody, even without the experienced eye of the little lawyer, could possibly mistake for waiters, hotel attendants or guests. He wondered what new rumors or police tips might account for this detail of plainclothesmen at a charity testimonial dinner to one of the city's leading citizens. He knew Robert P. Swale as a business man and philanthropist, who had his finger in any number of financial pies, and he found himself wondering if these might still include certain interests which had once linked the name of Robert P. Swale with various politicians and assorted higher-ups of the old South Side boys.

"What's up, Malone?" Dolly Dove asked when she joined him in the lobby. "Backstage is crawling with cops. Somebody aiming for Mr. Big, maybe?"

Malone said "Anything can happen, anytime, anywhere," and followed Dolly Dove to where her car was parked, in a special private parking lot reserved for officials, distinguished guests, and people like Dolly Dove. The attendant in charge insisted on unparking the car and held the door for her with fascinated attention as she ankled into it. Malone climbed into the front seat beside her and, pulling out the dashboard ashtray, safely deposited an inch of ash that he had been carefully juggling on the way. This was a rare show of neatness on his part, out of deference to Dolly Dove and the new lime green convertible. Normally the ashes would have been allowed to cascade down his vest and onto the floor.

"I haven't any idea who might be aiming for, or even at, Robert P. Swale," Malone said, as Dolly Dove made a hair-pin turn into traffic, with just a hair between them and disaster. He waited a minute to catch his breath before going on. "Maybe it's just the general scare. It's years since Bob Swale was mixed up in anything. You remember the Twenty-second street affair, the one the newspapers called the Chinatown Massacre—" He paused and looked at Dolly Dove. The honey-gold hair, the baby-bloom complexion. "No," he said decisively, "you wouldn't remember."

He laid a protective hand on the tiny one that was zig-zagging the convertible through the early-evening Loop traffic. "It's really before my time too," he said, mostly to reassure himself. Dolly Dove didn't seem to hear a word he was saying. "But I've heard tell that in those days Bob Swale had a piece of nearly everything. On the South Side, that is. North of the Loop the North Side boys had it all their own way. That is, before the war started. I mean the one in Chi-

cago, not the one in Europe. Of course, that was before Bob Swale married into the Horwell millions. The big headache powder people. Lilli Horwell. Lilli's put on a lot of weight since those days. You must have seen her sitting up there at the head table, the ones with the diamonds in her hair."

Maybe it was the mention of diamonds, but for the first time Dolly Dove took an interest in the conversation. "See her! Lilli was all over the place. Back stage, trying to run the whole style show. She drove everybody crazy. Maybe she's the one they're after," Dolly Dove finished wistfully.

He could sympathize with Dolly's feelings, Malone reflected. Lilli might have been a lively one in her salad days—she must have been, or she wouldn't have gone in for a marriage that was so far off-beat for a Blue-Book bride. The salad had wilted long ago, but the lettuce was still holding up pretty well, or Lilli wouldn't be able to afford such worthy—and well-publicized—philanthropies including a home for wayward girls, ping-pong and sweet-talk centers for the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents, and the personal sponsorship of an arts magazine. For most of these—except the arts magazine—Robert P. Swale was taking the public bows, and Malone couldn't help wondering how Lilli was taking that, what with that "driving, dynamic personality" the newspapers were always referring to.

He wondered what Robert P. Swale was up to lately, after all those years as a leading citizen and a philanthropist, for the police to be bothered about him.

The lime green convertible pulled up in front of the *Chez Paree* with the spine-snapping lurch that was standard landing procedure whenever Dolly Dove was at the wheel. Then she swept through the door a step ahead of Malone smiled dazzlingly at everybody in sight and especially at the waiters, sat down gracefully at their reserved table and announced that she was so hungry she could eat the favorite at Tanforan, hide and all.

Malone looked across the table and what met his eyes drove all reminiscences of gang wars and rumors of murders out of his mind. Whatever magic she had done to her hair, it brought out the spun-gold tones in a lustrous halo, just like they said in the singing commercials. The lipstick she wore was something between rosy hope and purple promise, and her voice had a touch of both in it. He noticed that the corsage she wore was a tasteful selection from the flowers that Joe the Angel had so thoughtfully salvaged from Rico's funeral parlor.

That brought his thoughts back to the funeral and while they waited for their drinks he recounted the events of the day, the confusion at the cemetery, the police swarming all over the place and only adding to the feeling of terror and suspense that the newspapers had succeeded in whipping up all over town.

"But let's forget about it," he said reassuringly, as the waiter arrived. "It's nothing that's going to interfere with our lovely evening—"

He'd seldom been quite so wrong in his life.

They'd barely reached the stage of ordering supper when von Flanagan appeared at the edge of the room, looking over the crowd, and Malone immediately felt an unpleasantly cold finger of apprehension poking along his spine. The *Chez* was not one of the big police officer's regular visiting spots and forthermore, Klutchetsky was with him, which gave it the appearance of an official call.

He kept his aplomb however even as von Flanagan spotted him and strode purposefully over to his table.

"Sorry to bust up your evening," von Flanagan said, "but you've got some explaining to do. You've got a lot of explaining to do."

"Now look here—" Malone began in what was a feeble and, he knew, futile protest.

"Look here, nothing," von Flanagan said briskly. "Kiss your date goodbye and come along and start explaining how you knew, ahead of time, how Bob Swale was going to be murdered."

Malone blinked. "The last time I saw Robert P. Swale, he was enjoying the best of health. At least, almost the best."

"Well, he ain't now," von Flanagan said. "Not even almost. And you not only knew it ahead of time but what's more, you knew he was going to get it with an African throwing spear." Before Malone could catch his breath he added "So let's go downtown and talk this over, and not make a nasty scene in this nice, quiet nightclub."

"But I've been planning this date for a long time," Malone protested unhappily.

"And maybe some of your clients had been planning to murder Bob Swale for a long time," von Flanagan said. "The little lady can wait."

It always happened that way, the little lawyer thought bitterly. The long and perfect buildup, even to a corsage—and then something like this.

Dolly Dove rose to the occasion. "The little lady is coming with you," she said briskly.

"Oh no, you're not," von Flanagan began.

"Oh yes I am," Dolly Dove told him. "I was around Mr.

Swale this evening. In fact, he even made a pass at me. And I made one right back at him, with the flat of my hand, the plastered bum."

"Plastered?" von Flanagan said.

Dolly Dove said "He was so pie-eyed, his crust was showing. So I probably know as much about this as Malone does, and I'm coming right along."

It may have been the firm finality in her voice, or it may have been just one good, long look at Dolly Dove, but von Flanagan growled an assent, nodded to Klutchetsky, and began elbowing a path to the exit. Malone seized an opportunity to squeeze Dolly Dove's hand and whisper "You didn't need to do this, you know."

"I know," she whispered back, "but I don't like being left stranded at the *Chez* or anywhere. Besides, I was curious."

In spite of the warm glow that her presence gave him, Malone felt the sense of apprehension grow and envelope him. Something had gone on and was going on that he couldn't understand at all, perhaps didn't even want to understand. It was dark and obscure and mysterious, and it frightened him.

It didn't make him feel any better to walk into von Flanagan's office and see the throwing-stick itself lying on top of the big flat-topped desk, a slender, delicate, but deadly-looking weapon with a wicked looking spear-head and a feather tail. He looked at it, at the dark blood still congealing on the needle-sharp point of it, and shuddered.

"Lab's through with it," Gadenski said, getting up.

Malone looked at the skinny, black-haired police detective and said "Who's missing? Thought he was dead."

"Borrowed Gadenski from Missing Persons," von Flanagan said. He sat down heavily. "Account of, he's an expert on these things." He indicated the throwing-stick.

Malone raised a questioning eyebrow. Gadenski nodded. "Have been, ever since somebody gave my nephew Stanley a bow and arrow. Got to be a hobby of mine. Read all about this stuff."

The lawyer waved Dolly Dove to the most comfortable chair and kept on with Gadenski, still stalling for thinking time. "What's some more about it?"

"Well," Gadenski said, brightly and happily, "it's real name is assegai. Because the wood comes from the assegai tree." He went on, reciting rapidly "Botanically named the Curtisia faginea, a relative of the dogwood tree, with big white and pinkish flowers. It's the favorite weapon of the Zulu warrior who can drive it clear

through a gazelle a hundred yards away. Notice how delicately balanced it is, and how sharp the point is. The feather tail is to make it fly faster." Gadenski paused, smiled patronizingly. "Eagle feathers, naturally. To make it fly faster than chicken feathers would."

"I suppose horse feathers would make it fly even faster," Malone said nastily, "if they came from Nashua."

Von Flanagan snorted. "Shut up, Malone. It's nice to know what this African throwing-stick is all about, but what I want to know is, how Malone had the information on how it was going to be used, and had it early today."

Gadenski looked hurt, and sat down again. Malone looked innocent.

"I didn't know anything about it," he said weakly. "I just—said that." He hoped that was the truth. Because there was only one other possible solution he could see, and he didn't like the prospect of it. Though, he reminded himself, while there was no Welsh grandmother in his ancestry, there had been times when his premonitions had come uncomfortably and terrifyingly close to second sight.

"Why did you say it?" von Flanagan demanded, in a voice like thunder.

Malone thought frantically and miserably. "I don't know."

Von Flanagan snorted again, and glared at him.

Dolly Dove came to his rescue and changed the subject by asking "Where did you find it?"

"In Robert P. Swale's back," von Flanagan said. "And Robert P. Swale was flat on his face in the private parking lot by the hotel." He turned back to Malone. "And you—"

"Were there any Zulus around?" Dolly Dove asked hastily.

Von Flanagan glared at her instead. Malone felt a rush of gratitude that included thoughts of a certain pearl grey chiffon negligee, straight from Paris, he'd noticed only a few days before in a Michigan Avenue shop.

"No, there weren't any Zulus around," von Flanagan said, "and you keep out of this."

"Wouldn't have to be a Zulu," Malone said quickly, picking it up. "What about a javeline thrower, like in the Olympic games? That thing can't be easily thrown."

The subject seemed to be successfully changed, at least for the moment. Von Flanagan nodded, slowly. "Could be."

Klutchetsky stirred his huge bulk and spoke for the first, and probably only time that evening. "Pitcher," he said.

Von Flanagan nodded again. "Could also be a baseball pitcher." He looked at Gadenski. "You're the expert."

"Well," Gadenski said dubiously, "of course, it would be an entirely different kind of wind-up, but—"

There was a little silence, for which Malone thanked providence. "So all I've got to do," von Flanagan roared at last, "is find a javelin thrower outa the Olympic games maybe, or a baseball player with a funny wind-up who didn't like Robert P. Swale *and who knows Malone!*"

This time, the silence was a deathly one.

And this time, it was Malone who succeeded in switching the subject. "Just how could this javelin thrower, or big-league baseball player, throw that thing a hundred yards—like Gadenski said—across the parking lot, without attracting anybody's attention?"

It worked. Von Flanagan looked through some papers on his desk and said "At that time, which must have been around eleven-fifteen, there wasn't nobody in the parking lot except the attendant. And I say it must have been around eleven-fifteen, on account of, the attendant was gone, for about ten minutes maybe, about that time. This attendant, whose name is,"—he looked closely—"Willie R. Henkin, states he left the parking lot for approximately ten minutes beginning at eleven-fifteen to sneak out and catch the girl act in the floor-show next door which goes on at that hour. "And the body of Robert P. Swale was discovered at eleven-forty-five and hadn't been dead long." He looked up. "And there wasn't anybody else around as far as he knows. Now Malone—"

"Who found him?" Malone asked.

"Mrs. Swale. Lilli Swale. He'd wandered off someplace after the big doings, and after the last act in the show she and some friend of hers, name of Mawson Satterlee, went looking for him and found him dead by his car in the parking lot. So that's what we know, and we know what the name of this thing is, and what kind of wood it was made of, and an Olympic games javelin thrower or a baseball pitcher could have, but not necessarily did throw it, and that's all we know, except—"

"Where did it come from?" Malone said, catching at what he suspected would be his last straw. "How did it get all the way to Chicago from Africa?"

Gadenski cleared his throat. "I can make a good guess," he offered. "It came from a little shop in Maywood, full of all kinds of funny junk. Old books, and second-hand furniture, and just plain junk, and also a lot of old firearms and all kinds of funny old weapons of all kinds. The guy's a collector of 'em. I go out there sometimes, and he

had a couple of these hung up on the wall."

A premonition that was more than second-sight began to grow in Malone's mind.

"Crazy little guy," Gadenski went on. "Reads everything he can about gangsters, the real old-time stuff, so much he thinks he's one himself. Hangs around the bad boys all the time. They usually brush him off, but he gives 'em laughs." He added, "Little guy, Walter Schmidt. Bald as an ostrich egg, bushy red eyebrows."

The premonition had become a certainty. The cold poking finger of apprehension had grown and become a fist now, and it was choking him breathless.

"We'll pick him up," von Flanagan said, making a note, and nodding to Klutchetsky to get going. "All right, Malone—"

"Von Flanagan," the little lawyer begged miserably. "Think something."

Von Flanagan stared at him balefully. "Think *what?*"

"I don't care," Malone said. "Think anything. You pick it. Just *think* something."

There was another silence, a puzzled one. After a time von Flanagan said "All right, I am thinking something, I'm thinking you'd better quit stalling and tell me some facts."

"I know that," Malone said, waving that idea away. "You don't understand." He drew a long breath. "Von Flanagan, I want you to think about something. Don't tell me what it is. You pick it out. Just think it. I want to see if I know what it is."

"You mean, you—" Von Flanagan blinked. Then he nodded. "Okay, here goes." He looked hard at Malone and turned fairly purple in the face with concentration. After a full minute he said, "All right, I was thinking."

Malone shook his head. "I didn't get it." There was a little relief in his tone, but puzzlement too. "What was it?"

"I was thinking about my mother-in-law's birthday party a week ago yesterday night," von Flanagan said, "and how my cousin Al—" He checked himself. "Malone, are you sure you feel real well?"

"No," Malone said in an unhappy voice, "no, I don't feel well at all."

"Malone," Dolly Dove said, fascinated, "do you mean you've turned out to be one of those people who can read other people's minds?" She gasped. "Like telling what's on playing cards other people are looking at?"

"If I could tell that," Malone assured her, "I'd be a much better-off man today. But—"

Von Flanagan was still staring at Malone. "Maybe you ought to go somewhere and lie down for a while."

"Maybe I should," Malone

said. He wanted a little peace and quiet in which to do some thinking of his own. All he knew now was that whatever was happening to him was something he didn't like at all.

"Malone," von Flanagan said suspiciously, "you wouldn't lie to me, would you?"

"I would not," Malone said. He added, "Certainly, not about a thing like this. I told you, I didn't know why I said that about the African throwing-stick this afternoon, and I was telling the absolute truth. I'm telling the absolute truth now when I tell you that I'm positive somebody near me was thinking about murdering somebody with an African throwing-stick, and the thought got into my mind." He reflected that in the strictest interest of absolute truth he should go on and explain about Smitty, but that would be carrying honesty just a little too far.

"I never met anything like this in my life!" von Flanagan said, with unmixed awe as he looked at Malone. A light came into his eyes. "Malone, maybe if you get near this person again and he thinks something else, you'll be able to identify him."

"It's a chance," Malone said. He added "though I doubt if it would hold up in front of a jury."

Von Flanagan shrugged his shoulders and remarked that juries were the district attorney's worry, and not his. "Maybe this person will even be so obliging as to think why he did it, and save us a lot of trouble all around. If anyone needed any particular reason for murdering this guy."

Malone nodded at that. The late Robert P. Swale had been a man who attracted enemies as naturally as c a n d y attracted babies.

"He was still mixed up in a lot of stuff," von Flanagan said. "For a public-spirited guy, that is. Tangled with Max Hook lately. Though the Max Hook boys don't go much for African throwing sticks." He grinned unpleasantly.

Malone reminded his old friend of the business rivalry that was reputed to be springing up since the recent natural death of Alvin (the Pike) Peake.

"That would fit in too," von Flanagan said. He added suddenly, "So his widow says. Want to meet her? She's in the next room with this Satterlee guy, waiting to sign her statement." He told Gadenski to invite the lady in.

Malone looked up curiously as the former Lilli Horwell swept into the room with all the aplomb of a once-famous beauty who hasn't been told yet that age can wither. The headache powder heiress still had the blazing red hair for which she'd been justly admired and, it seemed to

Malone, it had grown even redder with the years. There was a lot more of Lilli Horwell, now Swale, than there had been, too, but he had to admit that she carried it with considerable dash.

Her companion was a pallid, frail man with a slightly receding chin, pale hair and eyes, and a dress shirt that, to Malone's shuddering horror, was a light, delicate blue.

She seemed to feel that some explanation of him was necessary, and introduced him to Malone as editor of *Dynamic!* the new literary publication she was sponsoring. Malone nodded to him and reflected that while dynamic was certainly the word for Lilli, the only word for Mawson Satterlee was delicate.

He wondered why she'd been brought to police headquarters. Certainly the so recently made widow of Robert P. Swale deserved all the red carpet treatment that could be rolled out. Then on immediate second thought, he realized that it was the other way around. She hadn't been brought here, she'd come here. Lilli Swale was going to want to know what was going on in the investigation every inch of the way, and von Flanagan was going to be fortunate if she gave him time to go home and shave.

He watched while she and her little editor signed statements regarding the discovery of the body, having come out to the parking lot in search of the late Mr. Swale after the last act of the floor show at which they had a ringside table. Or rather, she had discovered it and gone in search of Mawson Satterlee, informing him, the police, the parking lot attendant and, as near as Malone could figure out, everybody within earshot. She had very little else to adding that naturally Mr. Swale had enemies, especially among the lower elements of the city, giving Malone a cool look as she added the description. And was the police department doing anything about it?

Von Flanagan hastened to assure her that they were doing everything about it, but Lilli Swale showed every indication of remaining right where she was until her husband's murderer was not only found, but quite probably convicted and executed. And it was getting later by the minute.

Malone stepped up with the smile and manner which had, more than once, reduced the feminine members of a jury to complete and moist-eyed harmony and fellow feeling, and said, "My dear lady—let me assure you, you haven't a thing to concern yourself about. The affair couldn't be in more capable hands and believe me, I've known Captain von Flanagan for years and years."

He did everything but pat her hand as he went on, "Why, he even has a suspect right now, a very hot suspect. Has his name, his address, his description—everything. And there's a man out after him right now."

Lilli Swale looked at von Flanagan. "Well?"

"That's right," von Flanagan said. "Absolutely right."

"Why," Malone assured her warmly, "he'll probably have the arrest made and everything settled by the time you wake up in the morning, dear lady. I promise it."

This time she said it "Well —", and after only a few more minutes, and many more reassurances from Malone, she was on her way.

Von Flanagan mopped his brow and said, "Well, I owe you for that, anyway. So go on with your date—but be here in the morning!" He scowled. "And we'd better have that guy Schmidt here in the morning, too, if I know that red-haired dame's temper."

Malone remembered that the missing Schmidt was, in a manner of speaking, his client, and called himself several names, including Judas. But it was too late now.

"Tell me," von Flanagan said suddenly, "while she was here —Malone, was she thinking anything?"

Malone shook his head. "Not a thing, as far as I know."

Dolly Dove sniffed. "She probably was keeping her mind a blank, if she has a mind, and if it isn't blank all the time anyway. Because she probably killed the guy herself."

"It would make everything very simple if she had," Malone said, "but she was watching the floor show. And anyway, why?"

"Oh, stuff like this fool editor and that fool magazine."

Hardly a motive for murder, Malone thought, but he knew what she meant. Causes were all in line with Bob Swale's manner of life, but they were causes like free milk for voters' babies, and benefit funds for Christmas baskets. He and the insipid little Mawson Satterlee came from very different sides of the tracks. Malone had seen one issue of *Dynamic!* and reflected that it—made up of writers writing about other writers, at no cents per word—was hardly reading matter that would have appealed to the once gusty and lusty Robert P. Swale. But maybe the great man had changed.

"And he was a chaser," Dolly Dove said. "Not the kind that pinches girls in elevators, the kind that thinks about pinching them."

The little lawyer cluck-clucked, reminded her not to speak ill of the dead, steered her hastily out of the office before von

Flanagan could change his mind, out to the sidewalk and into a taxicab.

There was, he decided, no point in trying to pick up the lost gossamer threads of the evening now. Dolly Dove was still at his side, but the build-up was a total loss. And it was too late to go back to the *Chez* anyway.

And Joe the Angel's was the only place where he still had credit. A back booth in Joe the Angel's was no place to start a romantic build-up over again, but at least he could buy drink.

Joe the Angel had heard all about the murder of Robert P. Swale, and looked hopefully at Malone. In a case like this, there was always the possibility of a profitable client. He hailed them as they came in the door and waved them to seats at the bar. Malone abandoned his idea of the booth. Joe the Angel might have some helpful hints, and tomorrow was always another night.

The owner, manager, bartender and janitor of Joe the Angel's City Hall Bar beamed approvingly at Dolly Dove and said to Malone, "Who killed him, Malone?"

"I don't know," Malone said. "I'll probably read all about that in the newspapers."

Joe the Angel thought that was very funny. He poured two drinks and said to Billy Dove, "That Malone, he knows everything."

Dolly Dove nodded solemnly and said, "What's more, he even knows what people think. He reads minds."

Joe the Angel stared at her incredulously. "You mean he can tell what you think? And what I think?"

"What everybody thinks," Dolly Dove said. "He even knew what the murderer was thinking, only he doesn't know who it was?"

Now Joe the Angel stared at Malone.

"It's true," Malone said. He went on to tell his old friend what had happened that afternoon at the cemetery and its sequel that evening, omitting the minor detail of Smitty and the retainer. That was still nobody's business but his own.

Joe the Angel crossed himself hastily, and then poured another drink. The Polish janitor from the City Hall, who had been brooding silently into his beer, rose, walked to the door, looked at Malone and began, "Back in my country—" Then he went out.

"In his country," Dolly Dove said, "you'd probably have been burned as a witch."

And quite possibly rightly, Malone thought dismally. He didn't like this business, he didn't like any part of it, and yet there it was. Facts were facts,

and there was no getting around these. It gave him an unhappy, haunted feeling.

"Try it again," Dolly Dove said. She looked at Joe the Angel. "You think something."

"Malone, he knows what I am thinking," Joe the Angel said dourly.

"I do," Malone said, finishing his drink, and pushing the glass back for a refill, "and you'll be paid in the morning, and let's change the subject."

"Let's not," Dolly Dove said. "*I'll* think something."

"That wouldn't be fair," Malone objected. "If I did get it right, I'd probably just be wishing."

She sighed. "All right. Suppose we try it in reverse. You think something and I'll try to get it."

Malone paused, his glass in mid-air, and stared at her. "Just a minute. You've got something there—"

Before he could go on, the telephone rang. Joe the Angel came out of the booth and announced that it was for Malone.

Walter Schmidt had been found. He had been found, riddled with bullets, as the morning papers would put it, in an alley near Chicago Avenue. But he was alive, and he was calling for Malone. And von Flanagan was being very difficult and suspicious over the phone.

The little lawyer finished his drink, waved goodbye to Joe the Angel and went out to the lime green convertible with Dolly Dove. On the breathtaking drive to the hospital he was strangely silent, brooding.

Parked at the entrance he grabbed her hand and said, "Wait for me, don't leave me."

"I'll be here," she promised.

"I need you for something. An experiment. I don't know exactly what it is yet, but I know I'm going to need you."

He hurried up the steps. An indignant and red-faced von Flanagan was waiting for him in the lobby.

"Second sight," he snarled, "and I fell for it! I might have known better. After all these years, Malone—"

"I told you the truth," Malone said earnestly, "and I'm telling it to you again right now. And besides," he added, "it isn't second sight, it's mind reading."

Von Flanagan shrugged his shoulders to indicate what he thought of the difference. "The guy's asking for you. I suppose that's second sight too. Or mind reading."

"I don't know what it is," Malone said. "And what happened?"

"Just what I told you," von Flanagan said. "Little guy was found in an alley. Won't talk. Won't say anything except ask for you." He glared at Malone, then suddenly softened. "Ma-

lone—old friend. Maybe he'll talk to you."

Malone started to say something, changed his mind and said instead, with a wan smile, "Maybe he will." And maybe what he had to say would be for Malone's ears alone.

He noticed a few reporters hovering in the corridor and among them, Ned McKoen, reporter, columnist, commentator and occasionally, friend. That meant Smitty's little mishap was considered on the important side. He made a mental note to see McKoen on his way out and find out just what the social standing of this murder was.

Smitty had nothing to say, and he was saying it with grim determination. His lips, as the saying goes, were sealed. But his waxy face brightened a little at the sight of Malone.

"Here you are," von Flanagan said with forced brightness. "See, I got Malone for you. Now will you be a good boy and tell me who shot you up?"

Smitty's eyes told von Flanagan he'd happily see him in hell first.

"Now," von Flanagan said gently and reprovingly. "That's no way to be. That's no way to cooperate. We're your friends." He cleared his throat, delicately. "Suppose you don't make it, Smitty. We want to punish the guys who done it. We want to stop them from doing the same thing to somebody else. You want us to do that, don't you?" He looked at the injured man hopefully and anxiously.

"No," Smitty said flatly.

Malone sighed. "Leave me alone with him."

This time von Flanagan said "No," flatly.

Malone sighed again. He looked at Smitty. "Am I your lawyer?"

"Yes," Smitty said.

"Good." Malone looked at von Flanagan. "Privileged communications. Lawyer and client. Beat it. Scram. *Scat!*"

Von Flanagan muttered something highly inappropriate for a sickroom and the presence of a possibly dying man, and went away shaking his head gloomily.

"Now," Malone said, sitting down by the bed. "You can talk to me. Who shot you?"

But Smitty still said "No."

He argued the point for a wasted fifteen minutes and gave up. Smitty's lips were not only sealed, they were padlocked.

"Oh all right," he said wearily at last, "have it your own way. What do you want me to do for you?"

"Somebody—" Smitty whispered, "trying to—frame me —for a murder." His round blue eyes were frightened.

"Happens all the time," Malone assured him comfortingly. "Who? Whose murder? Why?"

Smitty shook his head weakly.

"Know lotsa—the guys. Knew the Pike. Went to see him when he was sick. He gave me box of papers to keep for him. Locked box. Said his partner would want them if he—died."

Malone rolled a cigar around between his fingers. "And his partner was—?"

"Don't know. But—somebody stole the box." His eyes held Malone's imploringly. "And—somebody stole—assegai—throwing stick—"

"I know that," Malone said. "Now look, Smitty, this is important—this morning—"

But Smitty's eyes were closed. Malone looked at him for a moment, then fled into the corridor and howled for the doctor.

Smitty was all right, the doctor announced a few minutes later, in fact in time he was going to be as good as new. But right now he was dead to the world and likely to stay that way for a long time.

Malone and von Flanagan looked at each other, two tired and defeated men.

"Somebody was trying to frame him for murder," Malone said at last.

"That," von Flanagan snapped, "is what they always say. He owned a bunch of these African throwing sticks. So he probably knew how to throw one. He'll probably come up with an alibi for the fifteen minutes the attendant was out of the parking lot,"—he gave Malone a shriveling glance—"if I know his lawyer, but I've broken alibis before.'

"And then somebody shot him in a purely playful mood," the little lawyer said.

"I'll find out about that too," von Flanagan said wrathfully. "In the meantime, he can't get away from here. And," he added with a final glare, "I always know where to find you when I want you." He strode off purposefully.

Malone and Ned McKoen headed for each other simultaneously. The lawyer said, "What brings you here, McKoen?" and the columnist said, "What's the score, Malone?" in one breath. It was Malone who stared down the other and was answered first.

"Bob Swale was done to death, as I like to put it, with an African throwing stick," Ned McKoen said. "This little guy was known to be a dealer in such odd and fanciful weapons. And according to my Little Gem Lightening Pocket Calculator, two and two make news."

"Food as far as it goes," Malone said sourly, "and that *is* as far as it goes." He was damned if he'd let the news of his sudden discovery of mental telepathy get all over Chicago. There wouldn't be a soul left in town to play poker with.

"Bob Swale," the columnist said, "was tied in very closely

with some of the late Alvin Peake's less salubrious interests. Or so the story goes. Or rather so the story would have gone."

Malone managed to look just interested enough and no more so, with a faint touch of skepticism added in.

"With Alvin Peake's sad and untimely end," Ned McKoen said, "there was about to be an investigation, and there would have been one hell of a big stink and one hell of a big story. Now, with Bob Swale dead, nobody cares, including me, and my paper. But where, Malone, does this Schmidt guy fit in?"

"If I knew," Malone said, "I just might tell you. But I don't. And," he added thoughtfully, "somehow I don't think he knows much either."

"Old pal," Ned McKoen said, "have you anything to say to an old pal?"

"Just this," Malone stated sententiously, "that Walter Schmidt, in keeping with the best old-time gangland tradition lies with sealed lips tonight, refusing to name his would-be assassins."

He went on out to the car and Dolly Dove, climbed in wearily and slammed the door.

"I waited for you," Dolly Dove said softly.

He squeezed her hand. "Don't go away," he said miserably.

Her smile promised him that she wouldn't. "Where to, Malone?"

He shook his head and lifted his shoulders.

"Let's go up to my place for a nightcap?"

It was a remark he'd been working towards now for days. And any other time during the long build-up he'd have welcomed it effusively. Now, he simply nodded.

He'd learned a few things but right now, none of them seemed to be important. Robert P. Swale and Alvin (the Pike) Peake had been hand in glove and glove in hand, that was news, but not exactly surprising. Alvin Pike had left a locked box probably full of information about Robert P. Swale with the little junk dealer and would-be gangster, Walter Schmidt. The box had disappeared and an explosive investigation into Robert P. Swale's connection had been imminent. Obviously, Malone reflected, some enterprising *American* reporter had swiped the box. But American reporters didn't go around murdering prominent citizens, even reprehensible ones.

Now Robert P. Swale was dead and so was the investigation and the story, which was unfortunate from the viewpoint of the investigators, the newspapers, and Robert P. Swale himself. Somebody had made off with an African throwing-stick from Smitty's collection and thrown it with deadly accuracy at Robert P. Swale. Now someone had

taken a bunch of pot shots at Smitty himself.

That was that, and none of it seemed the least important. The important thing, Malone thought, important and terrible and frightening, was that somehow, he'd known about it in advance.

He shivered.

Dolly Dove looked at him consolingly and said, "A drink will fix you up."

It did, and it didn't. It warmed him and comforted him a little, as did the brightness and cheerfulness of Dolly Dove's gay little living room, but it failed to lighten his spirits nor drive away the terrors that oppressed him.

She pushed a hassock over by his feet, sat down, clasped her lovely hands around her lovelier knees and looked up at him. "Tell me, Malone. That little man. While you were in the room with him—did he think anything?"

Malone scowled in thought. He shook his head. "Not that I noticed." He paused. "And, damn it, he didn't say much, either. Just that he was being framed for murder. I assume he meant this one. There haven't been any other conspicuous murders lately, not that I know of."

"I suppose there's no doubt at all about Alvin Peake?"

"None whatsoever," he assured her. "Everybody made very sure of that at the time." He scowled again. "Unless he means a murder that hasn't been committed yet, and somehow I don't think that he does."

"Anyway," she said thoughtfully, "you'd know if it were that, wouldn't you?"

He looked at her unhappily. There it was again, the thing he didn't like to think about. Somehow, he had to put it out of his mind, and right now.

Here he was, he reminded himself, in Dolly Dove's little apartment, a drink in his hand, Dolly Dove looking up at him with that sweet, gentle smile of hers. It was a situation he'd been working hard at creating and for a long time. Now he was here. But it was also four in the morning after a long, hard, full day.

After a few minutes of futile struggle, Malone put down his glass and his cigar, yawned once, and slept.

He woke a few hours later to the cheering odor of coffee and the bubbley sound of it perking away in the kitchen. Sun was streaming in through the chintz-curtained windows. Malone yawned and stretched. Somehow, nothing seemed quite as bad as it had a few hours before.

Dolly Dove came in with a tray of coffee and her brightest smile. The little lawyer lighted his first cigar of the day and smiled at her affectionately.

"And now," Dolly Dove said,

passing him a cup, "as you were saying a little while ago—"

The problems of the day came back to him in a rush, but so did something else. Last night he'd been on the verge of a very important discovery when he'd been rudely interrupted by von Flanagan's call, and it came back to him now.

"Dolly," he said earnestly. "Remember last night, in Joe the Angel's—you said—"

She nodded. "I said—suppose you try it in reverse. *You* think something, and I'll try to know what it is." She giggled. "And don't make me slap your face."

He stared at her. "That's it," Malone said. "I've got it now." He rose. "And I'm going right down to von Flanagan's office, right this minute."

"Right the next minute," she corrected him. "I'm going with you, but not in a hostess gown. You don't think I'd miss any of this now, do you?"

He had barely time to get his first cigar of the day under way before she reappeared, ready to go. One look at his rapt face informed her that this was no time for asking questions, and the drive in the lime-green convertible was made with velocity and in silence.

Von Flanagan looked up from his desk gloomily. "I didn't expect you to show your face around here right away," he said in a heavy, unhappy voice. He added, "But I suppose you know everything about everything."

"I don't know anything about anything," Malone said, waving Dolly Dove to a chair. "But I think—"

Von Flanagan glared at him. "Don't mention that w o r d around here, now, or ever," he said firmly. He went on, "Your little pal Smitty is in the clear. At the time Robert P. Swale was having an African throwing-stick thrown into him, Walter Schmidt was arguing out a traffic ticket with an Oak Park cop."

"I'm not surprised," Malone said smoothly and serenely. "I always expect my clients to be innocent. And,"—this t i m e, a little smugly—"I'm not even confused. You see, von Flanagan—"

He paused, lit a cigar, smiled and said, "Now on the subject of thinking—"

Von Flanagan groaned.

"We just had it backwards," Malone said. "I didn't know what anyone was thinking. Never could and never did. As my dear friend Dolly Dove pointed out to me, it was just the other way."

"You mean, you thought something?" von Flanagan asked.

"No," Malone told him, "I said something."

There was a little silence. Von Flanagan scowled at Malone, rubbed his ear, and finally said "I don't exactly get it."

"It's just as I told you," Ma-

lone went on. "I said something to you about not being surprised if somebody was murdered with an African throwing-stick. Now what put that in my head?"

"I've sometimes wondered," von Flanagan said acidly, "just what puts anything in your head."

Malone ignored him. "All the way out, I'd been wondering who Smitty was, and where I'd seen him. Well, I remember now. I'd met him right at his own place, that fantastic little junk shop of his. Judge Touralchuck and I stopped there one night in Maywood on our way to a—a meeting."

Von Flanagan snorted skeptically.

"I saw the African throwing-sticks. Seeing Smitty again put them in my mind. When I spoke to you, I simply said the first thing that came into my head, and that was it."

"Logical enough," von Flanagan said. "I'll go along with you that far."

"And," Malone said, "somebody heard me." He paused for dramatic effect. "Somebody had the murdering of Robert P. Swale already in mind and thought that I'd made a fine suggestion. As I had. Somebody who knew Smitty and that he had the things in his shop. Somebody who figured, rightly, that it would throw the police department into no end of confusion by making my prediction come true. As it did. It even," he added with due humility, "confused me."

Von Flanagan nodded slowly. "All right. I'll keep right on going along with you. Who was there, in earshot?"

Malone frowned, trying to remember. "Not so many. You were. Smitty was. Joe the Angel was. Joe the Angel's cousin Frankie, driving the car. Judge Touralchuck. And," —he frowned—"Robert P. Swale."

Von Flanagan rubbed the other ear. "Judge Touralchuck is out. He's deaf enough he probably didn't even hear you, and besides—" He paused. "And Robert P. Swale would hardly go around throwing African throwing-sticks at himself even if he could have done it."

"No," Malone said, "but he could have mentioned the remark to someone else."

There was silence while they both considered that.

"His wife, for instance," Dolly Dove said suddenly. "I bet he's the kind of guy who tells everything to his wife. Or was," she amended hastily.

They thought that over, too. "She was watching the floor show at the only time the attendant was away from the parking lot," von Flanagan objected. "Grant that Lilli Swale had reasons for wanting to murder her husband."

"Including," Malone put in, "the fact that a big scale investigation was about to bust loose, which would raise particular hell with the Swale social and other standing. Lilli would much rather have seen her husband dead than investigated."

"I'll take that, too," von Flanagan said. "And she probably could have thrown that thing the length of the parking lot and landed it right where she wanted it. But she couldn't have done it without the attendant seeing it, and the fact remains that the only time—" He paused, grabbed the telephone and said "I'll check."

Fifteen minutes later they faced the fact that during the brief interval the attendant, Willie R. Henkin, had been away, Lilli Swale had been at a floor-side table watching the last act of the floor show, and had been seen by, apparently, half the city of Chicago.

They sat and considered that in another long, gloomy silence.

"Cheer up, Malone," Dolly Dove said at last. "Nobody can be right all the time." She took out a cigarette and said, "Toss me a match."

He handed it to her instead—or started to. Instead he stared at her, lighted match in hand, burnt his fingers, dropped the match, beamed at her, hugged her enthusiastically and turned to von Flanagan, who inquired politely if he'd suddenly gone mad.

"Look!" the little lawyer said. "Because the damned thing is called an African throwing-stick, we've all blithely assumed it had to be thrown. Which, naturally, would have attracted the attention of the parking lot attendant. But she could have come along a little later, slipped up behind him, stabbed him with the spear—"

"Malone—" von Flanagan said, his face brightening.

"And," Malone went on, "when you point that out to her—you can also point out, that Walter Schmidt is recovering, and can identify the party who swiped his African throwing-stick, likewise the party who shot him up—that he can, and he will—" He crossed his fingers and hoped that the luck which had never deserted him before would not desert him now.

Von Flanagan's big red face fairly shone.

"Furthermore," Malone finished, "when it's all over and she's broken down and admitted it—which she will—she's bound to need a good defense lawyer, and—"

"I'll mention your name," von Flanagan said, reaching for the phone.

Events proved that Malone was right on all points but one. After it was all over, and after he'd visited Lilli Swale in the

county jail, accepted her retainer and warned her to say nothing to anyone unless her lawyer was present, he decided to call on the recuperating Smitty. Furthermore, he decided to return the little man's thousand dollar retainer. Reviewing what had happened, it had occurred to him that, for the thousand dollars, all he'd done for his client was to get him robbed, accused of murder, and finally, shot.

"But now," he said, "you can go ahead and tell who shot you. She's confessed."

But Smitty shook his head.

"Look," Malone said. "There's no reason not to talk now. There's no code of gangland ethics involved any more."

"Gangland ethics hell," Smitty said, opening his eyes wide. "The only reason I didn't tell last night, was because I didn't know."

Oh well, Malone told himself as he went away, it wasn't going to matter to von Flanagan anymore anyway. He went on happily to keep a new date with Dolly Dove, but first to do a little shopping and properly express his gratitude to her.

It was nearly four the next morning when he sat in Joe the Angel's bar, thinking things over. He looked almost as disreputable as he could get, his eyes red-rimmed from lack of sleep, his face unshaven, his hair mussed and his tie under one ear. And he was puzzled.

"It's not at all like the old days," he complained to Joe the Angel, twirling his glass of rye in his hand. "A negligee from Saks. Paris import. She didn't want it. A bracelet. A wrist watch. No. Turned them both down."

Joe the Angel yawned and went on polishing the bar. "And what did she want, Malone?"

"She wanted," Malone said, "a supercharger for her car." He downed his rye, and sighed. "Times," he said wearily, "have changed."

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the man who liked toys

by . . . Leslie Charteris

It can be dangerous to like toys. . . .

CHIEF INSPECTOR CLAUDE EUSTACE TEAL rested his pudgy elbows on the table and unfolded the pink wrappings from a fresh wafer of chewing gum.

"That's all there was to it," he said. "And that's the way it always is. You get an idea, you spread a net out among the stool pigeons, and you catch a man. Then you do a lot of dull routine work to build up the evidence. That's how a real detective does his job; and that's the way Sherlock Holmes would have had to do it if he'd worked at Scotland Yard."

Simon Templar grinned amiably, and beckoned a waiter for the bill. The orchestra yawned and went into another dance number; but the floor show had been over for half an hour, and the room was emptying rapidly. It was two o'clock in the morning, and a fair proportion of the patrons of the Palace Royal had some work to think of before the next midnight.

"Maybe you're right, Claude," said the Saint mildly.

"I know I'm right," said Mr. Teal, in his drowsy voice. And then, as Simon pushed a fiver on to the plate, he chuckled. "But

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Simon Templar confuses poor Claude Eustace as Chief Inspector Teal asks, quite properly, why *Lewis Enstone had shot himself. Hadn't he?*

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I know you like pulling our legs about it, too."

They steered their way around the tables and up the stairs to the hotel lobby. It was another of those rare occasions when Mr. Teal had been able to enjoy the Saint's company without any lurking uneasiness about the outcome. For some weeks his life had been comparatively peaceful. No hints of further Saintly lawlessness had come to his ears.

At such times he admitted to himself, with a trace of genuine surprise, that there were few things which entertained him more than a social evening with the gay buccaneer who had set Scotland Yard more mysteries than they would ever solve.

"Drop in and see me next time I'm working on a case, Saint," Teal said in the lobby, with a truly staggering generosity for which the wine must have been partly responsible. "You'll see for yourself how we really do it."

"I'd like to," said the Saint; and if there was the trace of a smile in his eyes when he said it, it was entirely without malice.

He settled his soft hat on his smooth dark head and glanced around the lobby with the vague aimlessness which ordinarily precedes a parting at that hour. A little group of three men had discharged themselves from a nearby elevator and were moving boisterously and a trifle unsteadily towards the main entrance. Two of them were hatted and overcoated—a tallish man with a thin line of black moustache, and a tubby red-faced man with rimless spectacles. The third member of the party, who appeared to be the host, was a flabby flatfooted man of about fifty-five with a round bald head and a rather bulbous nose that would have persuaded any observant onlooker to expect that he would have drunk more than the others, which in fact he obviously had. All of them had the dishevelled and rather tragically ridiculous air of Captains of Industry who have gone off duty for the evening.

"That's Lewis Enstone—the chap with the nose," said Teal, who knew everyone. "He might have been one of the biggest men in the City if he could have kept off the bottle."

"And the other two?" asked the Saint incuriously, because he already knew.

"Just a couple of smaller men in the same game. Albert Costello—that's the tall one—and John Hammel." Mr. Teal chewed meditatively on his spearmint. "If anything happens to them, I shall want to know where you were at the time," he added warningly.

"I shan't know anything about it," said the Saint piously.

He lighted a cigarette and watched the trio of celebrators

disinterestedly. Hammel and Costello he knew something about, but the more sozzled member of the party was new to him.

"You do unnerstan', boys, don't you?" Enstone was articulating pathetically, with his arms spread around the shoulders of his guests in an affectionate manner which contributed helpfully towards his support. "It's jus' business. I'm not hard-hearted. I'm kind to my wife an' children an' everything, God bless 'em. An' anytime I can do anything for either of you—why, you jus' lemme know."

"That's awfully good of you, old man," said Hammel, with the blurry-eyed solemnity of his condition.

"Le's have lunch together on Tuesday," suggested Costello. "We might be able to talk about something that'd interest you."

"Right," said Enstone dimly. "Lush Tooshday. Hic."

"An' don't forget the kids," said Hammel confidentially.

Enstone giggled.

"I shouldn't forget that." In obscurely elaborate pantomime, he closed his fist with his forefinger extended and his thumb cocked vertically upwards, and aimed the forefinger between Hammel's eyes. "Shtick 'em up," he commanded gravely, and at once relapsed into further merriment, in which his guests joined somewhat hysterically.

The group separated at the entrance amid much handshaking and backslapping and alcoholic laughter; and Lewis Enstone wended his way back with cautious and preoccupied steps toward the elevator. Mr. Teal took a fresh bite on his gum and tightened his mouth disgustedly.

"Is he staying here?" asked the Saint.

"He lives here," said the detective. "He's lived here even when we knew for a fact that he hadn't got a penny to his name. Why, I remember once—"

He launched into a lengthy anecdote which had all the vitality of personal bitterness in the telling. Simon Templar, listening with the half of one well-trained ear that would prick up into instant attention if the story took any twist that might provide the germ of an adventure, but would remain intently passive if it didn't, smoked his cigarette and gazed abstractedly into space. His mind had that gift of complete division; and he had another job on hand to think about. Somewhere in the course of the story he gathered that Mr. Teal had once lost some money on the Stock Exchange over some shares in which Enstone was speculating; but there was nothing much about that misfortune to attract his interest, and the detective's mood of disparaging reminiscence was as good an opportunity as any other for him to plot out

a few details of the campaign against his latest quarry.

". . . So I lost my money, and I've kept the rest of it in gilt-edged stuff ever since," concluded Mr. Teal rancorously; and Simon took the last inhalation from his cigarette and dropped the stub into an ashtray.

"Thanks for the tip, Claude," he said lightly. "I gather that next time I murder somebody you'd like me to make it a financier."

Teal grunted, and hitched his coat around. "I shouldn't like you to murder anybody," he said, from his heart. "Now I've got to go home—I have to get up in the morning."

They walked towards the street doors. On their left they passed the information desk; and beside the desk had been standing a couple of bored and sleepy page-boys. Simon had observed them and their sleepiness as casually as he had observed the color of the carpet, but all at once he realized that their sleepiness had vanished. He had a sudden queer sensitiveness of suppressed excitement; and then one of the boys said something loud enough to be overheard which stopped Teal in his tracks and turned him abruptly.

"What's that?" he demanded.

"It's Mr. Enstone, sir. He just shot himself."

Mr. Teal scowled. To the newspapers it would be a surprise and a front-page sensation; to him it was a surprise and a potential menace to his night's rest if he butted into any responsibility. Then he shrugged.

"I'd better have a look," he said, and introduced himself.

There was a scurry to lead him towards the elevators. Mr. Teal ambled bulkily into the nearest car, and quite brazenly the Saint followed him. He had, after all, been kindly invited to "drop in" the next time the plump detective was handling a case. Teal put his hands in his pocket and stared in mountainous drowsiness at the downward-flying shaft. Simon studiously avoided his eye, and had a pleasant shock when the detective addressed him almost genially.

"I always thought there was something fishy about that fellow. Did he look as if he'd anything to shoot himself about, except the head that was waiting for him when he woke up?"

It was as if the decease of any financier, however caused, was a benison upon the earth for which Mr. Teal could not help being secretly and quite immorally grateful. That was the subtle impression he gave of his private feelings; but the rest of him was impenetrable stolidity and aloofness. He dismissed the escort of page-boys and strode to the door of the millionaire's suite. It was closed and silent. Teal knocked on it authoritative-

ly, and after a moment it opened six inches and disclosed a pale agitated face. Teal introduced himself again and the door opened wider, enlarging the agitated face into the unmistakeable full-length portrait of an assistant manager. Simon followed the detective in, and endeavored to look equally official.

"This will be a terrible scandal, Inspector," said the assistant manager.

Teal looked at him woodenly.

"Were you here when it happened?"

"No. I was downstairs, in my office—"

Teal collected the information, and ploughed past him. On the right, another door opened off the generous lobby; and through it could be seen another elderly man whose equally pale face and air of suppressed agitation bore a certain general similarity and also a self-contained superiority to the first. Even without his somber black coat and striped trousers, gray side-whiskers and passive hands, he would have stamped himself as something more cosmic than the assistant manager of a hotel—the assistant manager of a man.

"Who are you?" asked Teal.

"I am Fowler, sir. Mr. Enstone's valet."

"Were you here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is Mr. Enstone?"

"In the bedroom, sir."

They moved back across the lobby, with the assistant manager assuming the lead. Teal stopped.

"Will you be in your office if I want you?" he asked with great politeness; and the assistant manager seemed to disappear from the scene even before the door of the suite closed behind him.

Lewis Enstone was dead. He lay on his back beside the bed, with his head half-rolled over to one side, in such a way that both the entrance and the exit of the bullet which had killed him could be seen. It had been fired squarely into his right eye, leaving the ugly trail which only a heavy-caliber bullet fired at close range can leave. . . . The gun lay under the fingers of his right hand.

"Thumb on the trigger," Teal noted aloud.

He sat on the edge of the bed, pulling on a pair of gloves, pink-faced and unemotional. Simon observed the room. An ordinary, very tidy bedroom, barren of anything unusual except the subdued costliness of furnishing. Two windows, both shut and fastened. On a table in one corner, the only sign of disorder, the remains of a carelessly-opened parcel. Brown paper, ends of string, a plain cardboard box—empty. The millionaire had gone no further towards undressing than loosening his tie and undoing his collar.

"What happened?" asked Mr. Teal.

"Mr. Enstone had friends to dinner, sir," explained Fowler. "A Mr. Costello—"

"I know that. What happened when he came back from seeing them off?"

"He went straight to bed, sir."

"Was this door open?"

"At first, sir. I asked Mr. Enstone about the morning, and he told me to call him at eight. I then asked him whether he wished me to assist him to undress, and he gave me to understand that he did not. He closed the door, and I went back to the sitting-room."

"Did you leave the door open?"

"Yes, sir. I was doing a little clearing up. Then I heard the shot, sir."

"Do you know any reason why Mr. Enstone should have shot himself?"

"On the contrary, sir—I understand that his recent speculations had been highly successful."

"Where is his wife?"

"Mrs. Enstone and the children have been in Madeira, sir. We are expecting them home tomorrow."

"What was in that parcel Fowler?" ventured the Saint.

The valet glanced at the table. "I don't know, sir. I believe it must have been left by one of Mr. Enstone's guests. I noticed it on the dining-table when I brought in their coats and Mr. Enstone came back for it on his return and took it into the bedroom with him."

"You didn't hear anything said about it?" Simon asked.

"No, sir. I was not present after the coffee had been served—I understand that the gentlemen had private business to discuss."

"What are you getting at?" Mr. Teal asked seriously.

The Saint smiled apologetically; and being nearest the door, went out to open it as a second knocking disturbed the silence, and let in a gray-haired man with a black bag. While the police surgeon was making his preliminary examination, he drifted into the living room. The relics of a convivial dinner were all there—cigar-butts in the coffee cups, stains of spilt wine on the cloth, crumbs and ash everywhere, the stale smell of food and smoke hanging in the air—but those things did not interest him. He was not quite sure what would have interested him; but he wandered rather vacantly around the room, gazing introspectively at the prints of character which a long tenancy leaves even on anything so characterless as a hotel apartment. There were pictures on the walls and the side tables, mostly enlarged snapshots revealing Lewis Enstone relaxing in the bosom of his

family, which amused Simon for some time. On one of the side tables he found a curious object. It was a small wooden plate on which half a dozen wooden fowls stood in a circle. Their necks were pivoted at the base, and underneath the plate were six short strings joined to the necks and knotted together some distance further down where they were all attached at the same point to a wooden ball. It was these strings, and the weight of the ball at their lower ends, which kept the birds' heads raised; and Simon discovered that when he moved the plate so that the ball swung in a circle underneath, thus tightening and clackening each string in turn, the fowls mounted on the plate pecked vigorously in rotation at an invisible and apparently inexhaustable supply of corn, in a most ingenious mechanical display of gluttony.

He was still playing thoughtfully with the toy when he discovered Mr. Teal standing beside him. The detective's round pink face wore a look of almost comical incredulity.

"Is that how you spend your spare time?" he demanded.

"I think it's rather clever," said the Saint soberly. He put the toy down, and blinked at Fowler. "Does it belong to one of the children?"

"Mr. Enstone brought it home with him this evening, sir, to give Miss Annabel tomorrow," said the valet. "He was always picking up things like that. He was a very devoted father, sir."

Mr. Teal chewed for a moment; and then he said; "Have you finished? I'm going home."

Simon nodded pacifically, and accompanied him to the lift. As they went down he asked; "Did you find anything?"

"What did you expect me to find?"

Teal blinked.

"I thought the police were always believed to have a clue," murmured the Saint innocently.

"Enstone committed suicide," said Teal flatly. "What sort of clues do you want?"

"Why did he commit suicide?" asked the Saint, almost childishly.

Teal ruminated meditatively for a while, without answering. If anyone else had started such a discussion he would have been openly derisive. The same impulse was stirring in him then; but he restrained himself. He knew Simon Templar's wicked sense of humor, but he also knew that sometimes the Saint was most worth listening to when he sounded most absurd.

"Call me in the morning," said Mr. Teal at length, "and I may be able to tell you."

Simon Templar went home and slept fitfully. Lewis Enstone had shot himself—it seemed an obvious fact. The windows had

been closed and fastened, and any complicated trick of fastening them from the outside and escaping up or down a rope-ladder was ruled out by the bare two or three seconds that could have elapsed between the sound of the shot and the valet rushing in. But Fowler himself might . . . Why not suicide, anyway? But the Saint could run over every word and gesture and expression of leave-taking which he himself had witnessed in the hotel lobby, and none of it had carried even a hint of suicide. The only oddity about it had been the queer inexplicable piece of pantomime—the fist clenched, with the forefinger extended and the thumb cocked up in crude symbolism of a gun—the abstruse joke which had dissolved Enstone into a fit of inanely delighted giggling, with the hearty approval of his guests. . . . The psychological problem fascinated him. It muddled itself up with a litter of brown paper and a cardboard box, a wooden plate of pecking chickens, photographs . . . and the tangle kaleidoscoped through his dreams in a thousand different convolutions until morning.

At half-past twelve he found himself turning on to the Embankment with every expectation of being told that Mr. Teal was too busy to see him; but he was shown up a couple of minutes after he had sent in his name.

"Have you found out why Enstone committed suicide?" he asked.

"I haven't," said Teal, somewhat shortly. "His brokers say it's true that he'd been speculating successfully. Perhaps he had another account with a different firm which wasn't so lucky. We'll find out."

"Have you seen Costello or Hammel?"

"I've asked them to come and see me. They're due here about now."

Teal picked up a typewritten memorandum and studied it absorbedly. He would have liked to ask questions in his turn, but he didn't. He had failed lamentably, so far, to establish any reason whatsoever why Enstone should have committed suicide; and he was annoyed. He felt a personal grievance against the Saint for raising the question without also taking steps to answer it, but pride forbade him to ask for enlightment. Simon lighted a cigarette and smoked imperturbably until in a few minutes Costello and Hammel were announced. Teal stared at the Saint thoughtfully while the witnesses were seating themselves, but strangely enough he said nothing to intimate that police interviews were not open to outside audiences.

Presently he turned to the tall man with the thin black moustache.

"We're trying to find a reason

for Enstone's suicide, Mr. Costello," he said. "How long have you known him?"

"About eight or nine years."

"Have you any idea why he should have shot himself?"

"None at all, Inspector. It was a great shock. He had been making more money than most of us. When we were with him last night, he was in very high spirits—his family was on the way home, and he was always happy when he was looking forward to seeing them again."

"Did you ever lose money in any of his companies?"

"No."

"You know we can investigate that?"

Costello smiled slightly.

"I don't know why you should take that attitude, Inspector, but my affairs are open to any examination."

"Have you been making money yourself lately?"

"No. As a matter of fact, I've lost a bit," said Costello frankly. "I'm interested in International Cotton, you know."

He took out a cigarette and a lighter, and Simon found his eyes riveted on the device. It was of an uncommon shape, and by some reason or other it produced a glowing heat instead of a flame. Quite unconscious of his own temerity, the Saint said:

"That's something new, isn't it? I've never seen a lighter like that before."

Mr. Teal sat back blankly and gave the Saint a look which would have shrivelled any other interrupter to a cinder; and Costello turned the lighter over and said: "It's an invention of my own—I made it myself."

"I wish I could do things like that," said the Saint admiringly. "I suppose you must have had a technical training."

Costello hesitated for a second. Then:

"I started in an electrical engineering workshop when I was a boy," he explained briefly, and turned back to Teal's desk.

After a considerable pause the detective turned to the tubby man with the glasses, who had been sitting without any signs of life except the ceaseless switching of his eyes from one speaker to another.

"Are you in partnership with Mr. Costello, Mr. Hammel?" he asked.

"A working partnership—yes."

"Do you know any more about Enstone's affairs than Mr. Costello has been able to tell us?"

"I'm afraid not."

"What were you talking about at dinner last night?"

"It was about a merger. I'm in International Cotton, too. One of Enstone's concerns was Cosmopolitan Textiles. His shares were standing high and ours aren't doing too well, and we thought

that if we could induce him to amalgamate it would help us."

"What did Enstone think about that?"

"He didn't think there was enough in it for him. We had certain things to offer, but he decided they weren't sufficient."

"There wasn't any bad feeling about it?"

"Why, no. If all the business men who have refused to combine with each other at different times became enemies, there'd hardly be two men in the City on speaking terms."

Simon cleared his throat. "What was your first important job, Mr. Hammel?" he queried.

Hammel turned his eyes without moving his head. "I was chief salesman for an appliance manufacturer in the Midlands."

Teal concluded the interview soon afterwards without securing any further revelations, shook hands perfunctorily with the two men, and ushered them out. When he came back he looked down at the Saint like a cannibal inspecting the latest missionary.

"Why don't you join the force yourself?" he inquired heavily. "The new Police College is open now, and the Commissioner's supposed to be looking for men like you."

Simon took the sally like an armored car taking a snowball. He was sitting up on the edge of his chair with his blue eyes glinting with excitement.

"You big sap," he retorted, "do you look as if the Police College could teach anyone to solve a murder?"

Teal gulped as if he couldn't believe his ears. He took hold of the arms of his chair and spoke with an apoplectic restraint, as if he were conscientiously determined to give the Saint every chance to recover his sanity before he rang down for the bugs wagon.

"What murder are you talking about?" he demanded. "Enstone shot himself."

"Yes, Enstone shot himself," said the Saint. "But it was murder just the same."

"Have you been drinking something?"

"No. But Enstone had."

Teal swallowed, and almost choked himself in the process.

"Are you trying to tell me," he exploded, "that any man ever got drunk enough to shoot himself while he was making money?"

"They made him shoot himself."

"What do you mean—blackmail?"

"No."

The Saint pushed a hand through his hair. He had thought of things like that. He knew Enstone had shot himself, because no one else could have done it. Except Fowler, the valet—but that was the man whom Teal would have suspected at once if

he had suspected anyone, and it was too obvious, too insane. No man in his senses could have planned a murder with himself as the most obvious suspect.

Blackmail, then? But the Lewis Enstone he had seen in the lobby had never looked like a man bidding farewell to blackmailers.

And how could a man so openly devoted to his family have been led to provide the commoner materials of blackmail?

"No, Claude," said the Saint. "It wasn't that. They just made him do it."

Mr. Teal's spine tingled with the involuntary reflex chill that has its roots in man's immemorial fear of the supernatural. The Saint's conviction was so wild and yet real that for one fantastic moment the detective had a vision of Costello's intense black eyes fixed and dilating in a hypnotic stare, his slender sensitive hands moving in weird passes, his lips under the thin black moustache mouthing necromantic commands.

. . . It changed into another equally fantastic vision of two courteous but inflexible gentlemen handing a weapon to a third, bowing and going away, like a deputation to an officer who has been found to be a traitor, offering the graceful alternative to a court-martial—for the Honor of High Finance.

. . . Then it went sheer to derision.

"They just said: 'Lew, why don't you shoot yourself?' and he thought it was a great idea—is that it?" he gibed.

"It was something like that," Simon answered soberly. "You see, Enstone would do almost anything to amuse his children."

Teal's mouth opened, but no sounds came from it. His expression implied that a whole volcano of devastating sarcasm was boiling on the tip of his tongue, but that the Saint's lunacy had soared into realms of waffiness beyond the reach of repartee.

"Costello and Hammel had to do something," said the Saint. "International Cottons have been very bad for a long time—as you'd have known if you hadn't packed all the pennies away in a gilt-edged sock. On the other hand, Enstone's interest—Cosmopolitan Textiles—was good. Costello and Hammel could have pulled out in two ways: either by a merger, or else by having Enstone commit suicide so that Cosmopolitans would tumble down in the scare and they could buy them in—you'll probably find they've sold a bear in them all through the month, trying to break the price.

"And if you look at the papers this afternoon you'll see that all Enstone's securities have dropped through the bottom of the market—a bloke in his position can't

commit suicide without starting a panic. Costello and Hammel went to dinner to try for the merger, but if Enstone turned it down they were ready for the other thing."

"Well?" said Teal obstinately; but for the first time there seemed to be a tremor in the foundations of his disbelief.

"They only made one big mistake. They didn't arrange for Lew to leave a letter."

"People have shot themselves without leaving letters."

"I know. But not often. That's what started me thinking."

"Well?" said the detective again.

Simon rumpled his hair into more profound disorder, and said: "You see, Claude, in my disreputable line of business you're always thinking: 'Now, what would A do?—and what would B do?—and what would C do?' You have to be able to get inside people's minds and know what they're going to do and how they're going to do it, so you can always be one jump ahead of 'em. You have to be a practical psychologist—just like the head salesman of an appliance manufacturer in the Midlands."

Teal's mouth opened, but for some reason which was beyond his conscious comprehension he said nothing. And Simon Templar went on, in the disjointed way that he sometimes fell into when he was trying to express something which he himself had not yet grasped in bare words: "Sales psychology is just a study of human weaknesses. And that's a funny thing, you know. I remember the manager of one of the biggest novelty manufacturers in the world telling me that the soundest test of any idea for a new toy was whether it would appeal to a middle-aged business man. It's true, of course. It's so true that it's almost stopped being a joke—the father who plays with his little boy's birthday presents so energetically that the little boy has to shove off and smoke papa's pipe. Every middle-aged businessman has that strain of childishness in him somewhere, because without it he would never want to spend his life gathering more paper millions than he can ever spend, and building up rickety castles of golden cards that are always ready to topple over and be built up again. It's just a glorified kid's game with a box of bricks."

Simon raised his eyes suddenly—they were very bright and in some queer fashion sightless, as if his mind was separated from every physical awareness of his surroundings.

"Lewis Enstone was just that kind of a man," he said.

"Are you still thinking of that toy you were playing with?" Teal asked restlessly.

"That—and other things we

heard. And the photographs. Did you notice them?"

"No."

"One of them was Enstone playing with an electric train. In another of them he was under a rug, being a bear. In another he was working a big model merry-go-round. Most of the pictures were like that. The children came into them, of course, but you could see that Enstone was having the swellest time."

Teal, who had been fidgeting with a pencil, shrugged brusquely and sent it clattering across the desk.

"You still haven't shown me a murder," he stated.

"I had to find it myself," said the Saint gently. "You see, it was a kind of professional problem. Enstone was happily married, happy with his family, no more crooked than any other big-time financier, nothing on his conscience, rich and getting richer—how were they to make him commit suicide? If I'd been writing a story with him in it, for instance, how could I have made him commit suicide?"

"You'd have told him he had cancer," said Teal caustically, "and he'd have fallen for it."

Simon shook his head. "No. If I'd been a doctor—perhaps. But if Costello or Hammel had suggested it, he'd have wanted confirmation. And did he look like a man who'd just been told that he might have cancer?"

"It's your murder," said Mr. Teal, with the beginnings of a drowsy tolerance that was transparently rooted in sheer resignation. "I'll let you solve it."

"There were lots of pieces missing at first," said the Saint. "I only had Enstone's character and weaknesses. And then it came out—Hammel was a psychologist. That was good, because I'm a bit of a psychologist myself, and his mind would work something like mine. And then Costello could invent mechanical gadgets and make them himself. He shouldn't have fetched out that lighter, Claude—it gave me another of the missing pieces. And then there was the box."

"Which box?"

"The cardboard box—on his table, with the brown paper. You know Fowler said that he thought either Hammel or Costello left it. Have you got it here?"

"I expect it's somewhere in the building."

"Could we have it up?"

With the gesture of a blasé hangman reaching for the noose, Teal took hold of the telephone on his desk.

"You can have the gun, too, if you like," he said.

"Thanks," said the Saint. "I wanted the gun."

Teal gave the order; and they sat and looked at each other in silence until the exhibits arrived.

Teal's silence explained in fifty different ways that the Saint would be refused no facilities for nailing down his coffin in a manner that he would never be allowed to forget: but for some reason his facial register was not wholly convincing. When they were alone again, Simon went to the desk, picked up the gun, and put it in the box. It fitted very well.

"That's what happened, Claude," he said with quiet triumph. "They gave him the gun in the box."

"And he shot himself without knowing what he was doing," Teal said witheringly.

"That's just it," said the Saint, with a blue devil of mockery in his gaze. "He didn't know what he was doing."

Mr. Teal's molars clamped down cruelly on the inoffensive merchandise of the Wrigley Corporation.

"Well, what did he think he was doing—sitting under a rug pretending to be a bear?"

Simon sighed. "That's what I'm trying to work out."

Teal's chair creaked as his full weight slumped back in it in hopeless exasperation.

"Is that what you've been taking up so much of my time about?" he asked wearily.

"But I've got an idea, Claude," said the Saint, getting up and stretching himself. "Come out and lunch with me, and let's give it a rest. You've been thinking for nearly an hour, and I don't want your brain to overheat. I know a new place—wait, I'll look up the address."

He looked it up in the telephone directory; and Mr. Teal got up and took down his bowler hat from its peg. His baby blue eyes were inscrutably thoughtful, but he followed the Saint without thought. Whatever else the Saint wanted to say, however crazy he felt it must be, it was something he had to hear or else fret over for the rest of his days.

They drove in a taxi to Knightsbridge, with Mr. Teal chewing phlegmatically, in a superb affectation of bored unconcern. Presently the taxi stopped, and Simon climbed out. He led the way into an apartment building and into an elevator, saying something to the operator which Teal did not catch.

"What is this?" he asked, as they shot upwards. "A new restaurant?"

"It's a new place," said the Saint vaguely.

The elevator stopped, and they got out. They went along the corridor, and Simon rang the bell at one of the doors. It was opened by a good-looking maid who might have been other things in her spare time.

"Scotland Yard," said the Saint brazenly, and squeezed past her. He found his way into the sitting-room before anyone could

stop him: Chief Inspector Teal, recovering from the momentary paralysis of the shock, followed him: then came the maid.

"I'm sorry, sir—Mr. Costello is out."

Teal's bulk obscured her. All the boredom had smudged itself off his face, giving place to blank amazement and anger.

"What the devil's this joke?"

"It isn't a joke, Claude," said the Saint recklessly. "I just wanted to see if I could find something—you know what we were talking about—"

His keen gaze was quartering the room; and then it lighted on a big cheap kneehole desk whose well-worn shabbiness looked strangely out of keeping with the other furniture. On it was a litter of coils and wire and ebonite and dials—all the junk out of which amateur radio sets are created.

Simon reached the desk in his next stride, and began pulling open the drawers. Tools of all kinds, various sizes of wire and screws, odd wheels and sleeves and bolts and scraps of aluminum and brass, the completely typical hoard of any amateur mechanic's workshop. Then he came to a drawer that was locked. Without hesitation he caught up a large screwdriver and rammed it in above the lock: before anyone could grasp his intentions he had splintered the drawer open with a skilful twist.

Teal let out a shout and started across the room. Simon's hand dived into the drawer, came out with a nickel-plated revolver—it was exactly the same as the one with which Lewis Enstone had shot himself, but Teal wasn't noticing things like that. His impression was that the Saint really had gone raving mad after all, and the sight of the gun in the hands of any other raving maniac would have pulled him up.

"Put that down, you fool!" he yelled, and then he let out another shout as he saw the Saint turn the muzzle of the gun close up to his right eye, with his thumb on the trigger, exactly as Enstone must have held it. Teal lurched forward and knocked the weapon aside with a sweep of his arm; then he grabbed Simon by the wrist.

"That's enough of that," he said, without realizing what a futile thing it was to say.

Simon looked at him and smiled. "Thanks for saving my life, old beetroot," he murmured kindly. "But it really wasn't necessary. You see, Claude, that's the gun Enstone thought he was playing with!"

The maid was under the table letting out the opening note of a magnificent fit of hysterics. Teal let go the Saint, hauled her out, and shook her till she was quiet. There were more events cascading on him in those few seconds than he knew how to cope with, and he was not gentle.

"It's all right, miss," he growled. "I am from Scotland Yard. Just sit down somewhere, will you?" He turned to Simon. "Now, what's all this about?"

"The gun. Enstone's toy."

The Saint raised it again—his smile was quite sane, and with the feeling that he himself was the madman, Teal let him do what he wanted. Simon put the gun to his eye and pulled the trigger—pulled it, released it, pulled it again, keeping up the rhythmic movement. Something inside the gun whirred smoothly, as if wheels were whizzing around under the working of the lever. Then he pointed the gun straight into Teal's face and did the same thing.

Teal stared frozenly down the barrel and saw the black hole leap into a circle of light. He was looking at a flickering movie film of a boy shooting a masked burglar. It was tiny, puerile in subject, but perfect. It lasted about ten seconds, and then the barrel went dark again.

"Costello's present for Enstone's little boy," explained the Saint quietly. "He invented it and made it himself, of course—he always had a talent that way. Haven't you ever seen those electric flashlights that work without a battery? You keep on squeezing a lever, and it turns a miniature dynamo. Costello made a very small one, and fitted it into the hollow casting of a gun. Then he geared a tiny strip of film to it. It was a damn good new toy, Claude Eustace, and he must have been proud of it.

"They took it along to Enstone's; and when he'd turned down their merger and there was nothing else for them to do, they let him play with it just enough to tickle his palate, at just the right hour of the evening. Then they took it away from him and put it back in its box and gave it to him. They had a real gun in another box ready to switch."

Chief Inspector Teal stood like a rock, his jaws clamping a wad of spearmint that he had at last forgotten to chew. Then he said: "How did they know he wouldn't shoot his own son?"

"That was Hammel. He knew that Enstone wasn't capable of keeping his hands off a toy like that; and just to make certain he reminded Enstone of it the last thing before they left. He was a practical psychologist—I suppose we can begin to speak of him in the past tense now."

Simon Templar smiled again, and fished a cigarette out of his pocket. "But why I should bother to tell you all this when you could have got it out of a stool pigeon," he murmured, "is more than I can understand. I must be getting soft-hearted in my old age, Claude. After all, when you're so far ahead of Holmes."

Mr. Teal gulped pinkly, and picked up the telephone.

the impeccable mr. devereux

by . . . Louis Golding

A quiet story about a finally very tired man. . . .

I

A TAXI drew up outside the premises of Messrs. Vivaldi on the east side of Fifth Avenue. Messrs. Vivaldi are numbered amongst the most distinguished jewellers in the world, the sort of jewellers who do not need to expose behind their exiguous plate-glass window much more of their wares than a single pearl necklace or one incomparable solitaire ring.

The gentleman who got out of the taxi looked eminently the sort of gentleman for whom Messrs. Vivaldi conduct their exclusive affairs. He wore a top hat, a morning coat, striped grey trousers, spats. He carried a walking-stick. He had dark grey eyes and a small pointed beard. He looked like an aristocrat from one of the Latin countries of Europe. If he was a financier, he was a financier rather in the Lombard Street than the Wall Street tradition.

He paid off the taxi hurriedly and made his way into the shop with a haste which did not accord too well with his polished exterior. The doorman opened the

Louis Golding, distinguished British novelist, author of MR. EMMANUEL *and other works, tells the story of the impeccable Mr. Devereux, so obviously the sort of gentleman for whom Messrs. Vivaldi conducted their exclusive affairs.*

door obsequiously to let him pass, but breathed a cautionary word or two to himself. There are few human beings more cynical than these door-keepers of distinguished jewelery establishments. They are witnesses of the mournful spectacle, if only through the glass panels of the door, when lovers seek to buy love or to sustain it with jewelry. With the breadth of the pavement between them, they not infrequently behold those same lovers, no longer in a position to buy jewelry, endeavouring to sell matches.

So the gentleman guarding the entrance to Messrs. Vivaldi said to himself: "Look out now, Joe. When gentlemen are in a hurry to go in, sometimes they's in a hurry to get out, too. Look out, Joe."

The interior of Messrs. Vivaldi's establishment was far larger than you might have assumed from the smallness of its single window on Fifth Avenue. Over the wide grey acreage of its thick carpet four of five desks were spaced decorously. Nothing so gross as a counter demeaned the place. Behind each of the desks sat a well-dressed young man, as well dressed and grave as a Harley Street specialist. The young man at the desk nearest the door rose on the entry of the polished gentleman.

"I want a pearl necklace," said the gentleman. "I am rather in a hurry."

"Delighted to be of service to you," said the young man. "Would you be good enough to see Mr. Stralsund? He is our specialist in pearl necklaces." The two walked forward to the third desk. "The gentleman wants a pearl necklace, Mr. Stralsund," said the young man. Mr. Stralsund rose and bowed a little from the waist. "He is rather in a hurry."

The sensitive ear of Mr. Stralsund registered the faint note of warning in his colleague's tone. Perhaps it is too much to say that anything so emphatic as a warning was intended. Yet he agreed with his colleague—for that was the shade of meaning his colleague intended to convey—that buyers of pearl necklaces are not usually in a hurry. They usually bring a good deal of delicate and even anxious thought to the transaction, which frequently involves not one, but two, or three visits before it is consummated. Yet Mr. Stralsund was just as well aware that buyers of jewelry may sometimes be numbered amongst the most capricious of mortals. A historic diamond over which principalities have gone to war may once or twice in its history have been acquired with the casualness of a housewife buying the day's cabbage.

"Won't you sit down, sir?" suggested Mr. Stralsund, pointing out a chair on the opposite side of his own desk.

"I am very grateful," said the gentleman. "I am rather tired. It's been quite a rush to get here in time." The gentleman was evidently an Englishman. He had what Americans know as an Oxford accent.

"Indeed," said Mr. Stralsund. "If you're an expert, sir, there won't be any reason for you to be kept waiting at all. Of course, the same applies if you're not an expert. You can rely on us . . ."

"I shouldn't say that I know more than the next man," said the stranger with a smile, "but I shouldn't say I know less." It was quite a charming smile. "It's my wife who's the expert."

"Would you perhaps like to bring the lady along?" asked Mr. Stralsund. "Or it may be that the idea is to surprise her," he permitted himself to surmise.

"It's her birthday. She wouldn't forgive me if I turned up without her birthday present. And, of course, her present must be a surprise. Perhaps you'll be kind enough—"

"Oh certainly, sir. At once. May I ask what sum of money you wish to spend?"

"About ten thousand dollars. I think I could get a presentable necklace for about ten thousand dollars?"

"To be sure," said Mr. Stralsund. He turned round to a mirror-panel in the wall and inserted a key in a tiny keyhole. The panel swung on its hinges and revealed the steel door of a safe. As he turned he inclined his head slightly to his colleague at the desk two or three yards away. The colleague repeated the barely perceptible signal, until an awareness established itself in an inner room and a mouth drew itself closer to a telephone-receiver. Then the signal projected itself in faint waves backwards towards the plate-glass door, till the doorman was reached and the full circuit was achieved.

Mr. Stralsund worked the combination of the safe-lock, and pulled the safe-door out; then he turned over a number of velvet cases. "About ten thousand dollars," he said gently, "Mr. er—er—"

"My name is Devereux—John Devereux. You pronounce the x," he explained.

"Thank you, Mr. Devereux," said Mr. Stralsund. "I think we have the very thing you want." He came back to the desk and laid the velvet case down before him on his leather blotter. He hesitated before opening it. "Are you sure that the lady—" he started.

"I think I ought to explain to you—" said Mr. Devereux.

"Oh no, oh no," objected Mr. Stralsund. His colleagues bent down over their desks as if some minor matter of office-routine were being discussed. They felt their ears straining like trumpets out of their skulls.

"Why—why I'm in such a hurry," continued Mr. Devereux. "After all, ten thousand dollars is a fair sum of money to get through in five minutes. I'd have taken more time over it if the Florida boat hadn't been held up."

"You've just arrived from Florida, sir?"

"Yes. Engine trouble. We're nearly twenty-four hours late. It's been my custom for the past twenty years to let my wife have her birthday present at lunch. As I said, today's her birthday."

"How do you like this necklace, sir?"

"Very pleasant. Very pleasant, indeed. I think the color's a little grey. Wouldn't you say so? Or am I wrong?"

"Yes, perhaps you're right. Though the color warms up with wearing, of course. I've got several other necklaces about that price. May I show them to you?"

The other necklaces were produced. They included one of which the color was perfect, but the pearls were a little flimsy. In another they lacked regularity. "It's a pity," murmured Mr. Devereux. "I should like to have given her something exactly as she'd like it on this particular birthday." He looked up and smiled. "You see it's been rather a special year." His candor was quite winning; there was no trace of gush about it. "Ah well!" he sighed briefly. Then he pulled his watch out. "I wonder," he murmured under his breath. He put his watch back and thought a moment.

Mr. Stralsund could not prevent himself from suspecting that the gentleman was wondering whether or not he had time to pay a visit to the firm of Peter Bonas, a block or two higher up Fifth Avenue. Peter Bonas is, of course, the only firm of New York jewellers that can be said to rival in lustre the celebrated Messrs. Vivaldi. A little cheaper, perhaps, but they keep a larger assortment of jewels.

"No," said Mr. Devereux, still, as it were, half to himself. "I *must* get there in time for lunch." Mr. Stralsund was definitely relieved. Mr. Devereux might be considered a little odd, one way or another, but he was not a customer one likes to see disappearing up Fifth Avenue in the direction of Peter Bonas.

"I wonder," he suggested tentatively, "if I might be permitted to show you something just a little more expensive? Though, of course, when once a customer has indicated a price, it is not our habit—"

"Please," deprecated Mr. Devereux. "I know that when buying a pearl necklace, one can't be exact to five hundred dollars one way or the other. But one must fix a limit somewhere. And I've fixed it at ten thousand dollars."

Mr. Stralsund's professional

ear registered with interest the fact that there was an implication, at least, of elasticity in the situation. If Mr. Stralsund was the salesman that Messrs. Vivaldi and he himself knew himself to be, a license of five hundred dollars is something to work on. It might be convertible into a license of one thousand dollars, fifteen hundred dollars. The area of operations was opening itself out invitingly.

"I know you're in a hurry, sir," he said. "But if you'll permit me to show you two or three more necklaces, just a little more expensive than the ones you've seen . . ." He turned round to the open safe and after some moments turned again, his hands loaded with velvet cases. He put them down on the desk before him. The cordon of watchers stiffened in its unapparent vigilance. "Oh I beg your pardon," stammered Mr. Stralsund. "This one is fifteen thousand dollars."

"That's all right," said Mr. Devereux easily. "Let me just look at it. You see—" he lifted his eyes—"there's a silver wedding to think of. Though I don't think it will be pearls. At least not pearls alone. She's always had a fancy for pearls alternated with emeralds."

So there was a Silver Wedding to think of, too . . . and a necklace of pearls alternated with emeralds. If there was nothing wrong with this Mr. Devereux, strictly nothing at all, he was clearly the sort of customer for whom the Vivaldis and the Cartiers and the Bonases of this world exert themselves to be at their most obliging.

"No," Mr. Devereux decided, "No. I don't like it. I like it less than some of those I've already seen. Besides, as I told you, I have only brought ten thousand dollars with me. I think it'll have to be this one, after all; though I do feel that the pearls might have been a little more evenly matched at the price."

As I told you . . . But Mr. Devereux had not told Mr. Stralsund that he had actually brought, in hard cash, ten thousand dollars with him. For Mr. Stralsund concluded excitedly that the gentleman meant, must mean, real honest-to-God green-backs. He obviously could not mean to suggest he would be allowed to go off with a ten thousand dollar necklace in his pocket, leaving behind him no more formidable a token of goodwill than a check!

The thought of Mr. Devereux standing there so simply and naturally with dollar bills to the value of ten thousand dollars in his wallet went to his head a bit. A sudden impulse seized him. He turned towards the safe again and brought out a case which till that moment, he had not had the faintest intention of showing. To show it would have been an ex-

aggeration of salesmanship almost to the point of insolence. It contained a necklace valued at precisely twice the sum stipulated by the customer, no less than twenty thousand dollars.

"What do you think of this, sir?" asked Mr. Stralsund. His voice was a little hoarse with emotion. His eyes shone. For Mr. Stralsund did really understand about pearls, and it was a very beautiful necklace.

"Oh but this is magnificent!" exclaimed Mr. Devereux. "What color! What shape!" His fingers trembled a little as he handled the lovely thing. "How she'd adore it!" he breathed. He was in an almost ecstatic contemplation for several seconds. Then he came to himself again. "I'm sorry," he said a little dully. "I'm sure it's far too much for me."

"As a matter of fact," said Mr. Stralsund somewhat shamefacedly, "it costs twenty thousand dollars."

"It's worth it, every cent of it. But there you are." He took out his wallet; then from his wallet rather dispiritedly he extracted a wad of notes, ten notes of one thousand dollars apiece. "It'll have to be this one here. It's all I've got on me. Besides, it's all I've intended to spend. I'd better be getting along now."

"But listen, Mr. Devereux!" implored Mr. Stralsund. There was a note almost of frenzy in his voice. The frenzy communicated itself to the cordon of watchers. Their eyes glittered with excitement. It would be criminal to let that extra ten thousand dollars go. It would be an offence that would stink for ever in the nostrils of Messrs. Vivaldi.

"Please, don't worry about that extra ten thousand dollars!" implored Mr. Stralsund. It did not seem to be his own voice uttering words so unreal, so comical. He was afraid if he did not hold himself carefully under control, he would burst into a hoot of laughter. At the same time another part of his mind told him coolly that if he brought off this sale today he would gain immeasurably in prestige in the eyes of Messrs. Vivaldi. It would rank as a piece of classic salesmanship.

Mr. Devereux shook his head and sighed. At that moment he looked quite pathetic. A quick pang of contrition caught Mr. Stralsund under the heart. It seemed incredible to him that he had harbored a doubt, an anxiety, regarding a gentleman of such impeccable good faith, a gentleman who, at that very moment, stood counting out at the desk before him ten serene bills, each of the value of one thousand dollars. A blush of shame mantled Mr. Stralsund's cheeks.

Then Mr. Stralsund took himself in hand. Resting the palms of his hands on the desk before him, he leaned forward toward Mr. Devereux. "Excuse me" he

said soberly. "You do really like this necklace far more than any of these others?"

"Infinitely more. It's exactly what I want."

"May I suggest that you pay the balance tomorrow, and we'll send the necklace on immediately?"

"But don't you see, my dear fellow, I want to give my wife her present today?" He sounded quite peeved.

"Or if one of our representatives could accompany you to the bank—" started Mr. Stralsund.

"I'm going to give her her present at lunch," exploded Mr. Devereux, "and I'm late already! Will you please settle the matter?" He pushed forward the thousand dollar notes.

Mr. Stralsund breathed deeply. The stakes were big. He would play one more hand, even if the gentleman decided to knock him down, even if Messrs. Vivaldi decided later that his persistency had been ill-advised and vulgar.

"Please, Mr. Devereux, I won't hold you for more than a few moments. I think it would be a shame for you to go off with an inferior article, when we have the very thing you want. May I just have two words with my colleagues here? I'm perfectly certain it'll be all right. Of course you may take the necklace with you. You can arrange the balance of payment tomorrow, or the day after, when it's most convenient for you."

"I wouldn't dream of it—" objected Mr. Devereux. But Mr. Stralsund was already consulting with his colleagues. There was, however, nothing to consult about, for the colleagues had been aware of every stage of the transaction. Individually not one of the gentlemen would have taken on the responsibility of allowing an unknown gentleman to disappear with a twenty-thousand dollar necklace in his pocket, having paid ten thousand dollars for it. But collectively it seemed to them business timidity of the most culpable to let the chance of the bigger sale go by. To them as to Mr. Stralsund, the good solid thousand-dollar notes had clinched the matter. The fellow was as safe as the vaults of the Federal Reserve Bank.

They gathered round Mr. Devereux like a crowd of boys round the prettiest girl in a party. He took a lot of convincing for various reasons, not least because he disapproved in principle of allowing himself to be swayed by caprice in matters of business. "But it isn't a matter of business!" Mr. Stralsund pointed out in anguish. And Mr. Devereux, his eyes melting, conceded it wasn't. He insisted that some employee of the firm should accompany him to his home in Long Island, wait till the little birthday luncheon was over, and then go

round to the bank with him, to take payment in cash of the balance outstanding.

The Vivaldi young men were pained by the suggestion. How could he imagine they would allow him to leave their establishment in the custody, as it were, of a prison-warder? No, tomorrow would do, or the day after. Mr. Devereux greatly appreciated their courtesy, but he insisted on paying the balance that very day. If they would send one of their accredited representatives down to "Timbers," his house in Long Island, by five o'clock, he would himself have been round to the bank. The money would be there waiting.

Mr. Stralsund mopped his brow. "I hope you will permit us to wish Mrs. Devereux many happy returns of the day," he breathed. "Here is your receipt, sir. And if you don't think it a little premature, we should be most happy to discuss that matter of the pearl and emerald necklace with you at your convenience." Mr. Stralsund was nothing if not a quick worker.

Mr. Devereux smiled. "Yes," he said. "Perhaps it is a little premature. But you can rely on me. I will give you considerably more notice next time I wish to consult you." He slipped the padded case easily into his left-hand trouser pocket. "It's very kind of you to be so accommodating. Goodbye," he said. He made a formal gesture towards the door. The doorman opened it and bowed with a ground-sweeping obeisance generally reserved for native millionaires and visiting royalties, the whites of his eyes glazed in a paralysis of deference.

Some minutes after five o'clock the young emissary from the firm of Messrs. Vivaldi, a certain Mr. Liveing, presented himself at "Timbers," the house occupied by their client, Mr. Devereux. The house was no week-ender's villa. It did not bear its name on the gate on a piece of embossed copper. But Mr. Devereux had given circumstantial directions, and the place had been easy enough to find.

The wheels of Mr. Liveing's car crunched up a long gravel drive. Then Mr. Liveing got out. He rang a bell in the pilaster of a handsome portico. A tall and distinguished man-servant answered the bell. ("Our Mr. Devereux certainly does himself in style," mused Mr. Liveing.)

"Is this 'Timbers,' the home of Mr. Devereux?" asked Mr. Liveing.

"Yes, sir, this is 'Timbers,' " said the distinguished man-servant.

"I am Mr. Liveing from Messrs. Vivaldi," explained the young man. "Mr. Devereux is expecting me."

"Yes. Mr. Devereux is expecting you," agreed the man-servant.

"Will you come this way please. May I have your hat and coat?" The servant's manners were almost as distinguished as his master's. He motioned Mr. Liveing towards a room on the right hand side of the hall and opened the door. "Allow me," he said courteously.

Mr. Liveing entered. The room was rather a formal affair, almost like a doctor's waiting-room. There were a number of mahogany chairs ranged round a mahogany table, on which was disposed a dozen magazines of the ampler and glossier sort in symmetrical groups. There were some Japanese vases on the mantelpiece, or they might even have been Chinese. But Mr. Liveing did not have much time to decide the matter, for at that moment a door opposite the door by which he had entered, opened. Two burly men in uniform rushed forward, seized Mr. Liveing, and before he had had time to recover from his extreme astonishment, they were strapping him into a straight-waistcoat. When the breath came back into his lungs, he registered a violent protest. He struggled desperately inside his strait-waistcoat. He told the men exactly who he was, and what he had come about. They did not smile. They said gently it would be all right, he was in good hands now, and they were sure he would prefer to come along quietly. So, uttering soothing words, they carried him off to a padded cell, where he languished for a good many hours. To poor Mr. Liveing, they seemed like weeks and months.

The faces of the gentlemen waiting to receive Mr. Liveing in the premises of Messrs. Vivaldi were slightly pinched and haggard. While he was still only two hours, three hours late, they consoled themselves with the thought that something had happened to his car. When he still did not turn up they consoled themselves with the thought that perhaps he had been badly damaged in the accident, too. They fought desperately against the entry into their bosoms of any suspicion against the bona fides of Mr. Devereux. They felt they would sooner lose a year's salary apiece than entertain any suspicion against a gentleman so palpably honest, whom they had themselves, moreover, pressed with every means at their command to take an object priced twenty thousand dollars against a payment of ten.

By the time that Mr. Liveing was finally redeemed, detectives were already on the look-out for him at the outgoing trains and steamers, and a description of him had already been broadcast, a description which was to involve him in some embarrassment on a number of subsequent occasions. It may be stated that it

was the suspicions of Messrs. Vivaldi, whom he had served long and loyally, that Mr. Liveing found even more distressing than his experience in "Timbers."

But, of course, there was no such place as "Timbers" on Long Island. Mr. Liveing had carried away with him the copy of instructions as how to reach Mr. Devereux's country residence, so that it took quite a long time before it was discovered that the alleged "Timbers" was a private lunatic asylum and that Mr. Liveing was incarcerated in it. The asylum was an institution of the utmost probity. Mr. Devereux had informed them with convincing circumstantiality that he was being pursued by a homicidal maniac who was convinced that he was a representative of the firm of Vivaldi. The maniac had taken into his head the fantasy that he, Mr. Devereux, owed the firm of Vivaldi the sum of ten thousand dollars. He had succeeded by a ruse in getting the maniac to believe that he would pay over the money in his private country residence where he would call at five o'clock that day. He requested that the lunatic be apprehended, whilst he himself returned to New York to procure whatever additional legal and medical corroboration was still necessary. His charm and good manners imposed themselves on the asylum authorities as they had done on the employees of Messrs. Vivaldi. The specious Mr. Devereux got a good twenty-four hour start. He disappeared into the blue like a puff of cloud, like a passing smell of bay rum.

The day on which Mr. Devereux had presented himself successively at the jewellers' shop in Fifth Avenue and the private asylum in Long Island had been, as it happened, May the sixth. It was on May the sixth, exactly a year later, that a gentleman rang the bell at the same private asylum. He wore a top hat, a morning coat, striped grey trousers, spats. He carried a walking-stick.

A gentleman almost as handsome and distinguished as himself opened the door.

"Good-morning," said the visitor. "Is this Dr. Brentwood's Institute?"

"Yes, sir," said the resident gentleman. "Have you an appointment with him?"

"I haven't, but I'd very much like to see him."

"Yes, sir, by all means. Step this way."

The visitor was shown into a waiting-room on the right-hand side of the hall. He betook himself to the magazines bestowed symmetrically on the mahogany table in the centre of the room, while the resident gentleman, who was of course, the hall porter, withdrew and made his way towards Dr. Brentwood's office.

"A gentleman in the waiting-room to see you, sir," he announced. "Excuse my saying so, sir, but I seem to have seen the gentleman before."

"Hum-ha!" said Dr. Brentwood. "Doubtless a relative of one of the inmates."

"I don't quite think it's that, sir. I can't quite properly make out," he lied, "where I've seen him." It seemed to him he had done his duty. If the visitor *was* . . . well, if he was who he looked like to the last hair of his little beard, he had put the doctor on his guard. If he had made a mistake—and it was inconceivable that he had made a mistake—then he had in no way committed himself.

Dr. Brentwood made his way down to the waiting-room. The visitor rose and bowed slightly. "You are Dr. Brentwood?"

"I am," said Dr. Brentwood. He was a little short-sighted and he came a foot or two nearer. The voice certainly seemed familiar, even if disturbingly familiar—that exquisite English modulation in what is called the Oxford accent. "What can I do for you?" said Dr. Brentwood. "Won't you sit down?"

"The fact is," said the visitor, "I need your help. I am being pursued by a homicidal maniac who is convinced he is a representative of the firm of Messrs. Vivaldi. He has taken into his head the idea that I owe the firm the sum of ten thousand dollars." He continued with a story of which Dr. Brentwood was already a complete master. The Doctor's scalp creaked and tightened. He was horrified, he was appalled, by the fellow's preposterous insolence. Could it be possible that the scoundrel believed he could get by with that same story a second time? Had the rogue made some unbelievable mistake? Was there another Dr. Brentwood who ran another private asylum?

"Excuse me. Mr. Devereux," said Dr. Brentwood (for the fellow had given the same name), "will you allow me to call a secretary and take one or two notes? They will be necessary, you know." His voice and demeanor were quite calm. He had had some training in meeting sudden taut contingencies with sang froid.

"By all means," said Mr. Devereux. He rose briefly as Dr. Brentwood went out of the room, then he sat down again, and again turned his attention to the magazines.

Then things happened quickly. A call was put through to the police not many seconds later. In the meantime Dr. Brentwood felt that he might authorize his own lieutenants to anticipate the law. Mr. Devereux had hardly turned from the advertisement pages to the text, when he was seized from behind and pinioned. The arrival

of the officers of the law was not long delayed. The hand which pulled the bolt of the prison-cell and pulled it to after him, the voice which said get to hell in there, all seemed part of the same lightning mechanism. Mr. Devereux sat down without haste, even with dignity, on his truckle-bed. He had lost his walking-stick in these vigorous proceedings, but he still retained his silk hat. He smoothed the nap carefully with his sleeve, then put the hat down beside his feet. Then he sat and stared straight before him.

It was late that night, or perhaps very early next morning, that he drew the attention of the warder with a quietness and moderation which were a good deal more effective than the more violent summonses with which his fellow prisoners now and again addressed themselves to the prison authorities. The warder drew aside the small grill in the door. "And now what?" he demanded brusquely.

"Excuse me," said Mr. Devereux, "but I wanted to have a few words with you. May I?"

"Ho yes, so you may!" said the warder, with a cynical imitation of Mr. Devereux's voice. "Shoot!"

"The fact is," said Mr. Devereux, "I do hope you won't let him get hold of me."

"Who?" the warder inquired truculently.

"He says he comes from Messrs. Vivaldi, *you* know, the jewellers. I've managed to get him to call here today. He won't be long now. He says I owe them ten thousand dollars." Mr. Devereux continued with the story and concluded it. "I hope," he said anxiously, "you won't let him get hold of me. You won't, will you?"

"Oh no, we won't. You can rely on us," said the warder. His tone was curiously gentle for a man employed in so gruff a profession. He made a report to the prison-doctor as soon as he could be reached. That same day the prison-doors opened for Mr. Devereux and Mr. Devereux once more paid a visit to Dr. Brentwood's asylum, though he did not present himself unaccompanied.

This time he remained a guest of Dr. Brentwood for a considerable period. . . .

a man named smith

by . . . Lawrence Treat

What really happened to the man in the sport shirt who checked in that July afternoon. Was he—?

IN THE hotel business, and particularly when you're running a select, summer resort like mine, you develop a special instinct for the name Smith. That's why, when I got the card, I'd put them down for the corner room with a balcony, along with a notation to have flowers on the dresser. I always treat the unmarried couples with extra courtesy. Surcharge added. Naturally.

Sheriff Fred Logan had dropped in just before they arrived, that Friday afternoon in late July. He was standing at the desk and fiddling with the postcard rack. "Got you some guests," he said.

I looked around and saw them marching in ahead of the bellhop. Despite the dimness of the lobby, they'd both kept their sunglasses on. I could see her high, soft cheekbones, and the droop of her month. She was about twenty-five years old, city background, quiet, attractive, good taste, and she looked as if she was forcing herself and wished she hadn't come.

I thought I knew why. First time out, without her husband.

The man with her was well-dressed, and he was wearing the

Lawrence Treat, the distinguished mystery writer, describes some queer happenings in the select summer resort. The desperate pleading in her eyes struck a warning note. What was *wrong with these guests in Number 8?*

green, checked sport-shirt which was so important, later on. His panama had a low brim that hid the upper part of his face, and his heavy, glossy mustache looked more brown than reddish. Their bags were good quality, fairly new, unmatched. No golf clubs or tennis rackets. I figured their bar bill would amount to a cocktail apiece, that they'd tip adequately and would order â la carte, if pushed. They'd stay by themselves and go to bed early.

To my surprise she nudged past him and came to the desk. "Our reservations?" she said anxiously. She seemed to leave part of her voice with me in the unfinished sentence. "Smith?"

"Certainly," I said, reminding myself that women who sign are always with their right husbands. Or almost always. "I have a nice, large room for you, with a view of the lake. On the second floor."

I pushed the register towards her. Her fingers, slender and tapering, hesitated as she picked up the pen, and she wrote slowly. I could feel her shrink away from my stare. More than anything else in the world, I wanted her to take those glasses off.

"My husband," she said, almost shivering at the word, "caught a slight cold. He's lost his voice."

"Good food and a day in the sun will do wonders," I said.

I doubt whether she even heard me. She made a broad, flat mark with the pen, and she pressed so hard that she tore the paper. "Oh, yes," she said, as if I'd mentioned the room rate. "Of course." Reluctantly she took off her glasses and raised her dark, expressive eyes.

The desperate pleading in them hit me with a jolt, and I was aware that she was undergoing a strain which taxed her almost beyond her endurance. I let my glance meet hers before I turned stiffly, got the key and handed it to the bellhop.

"Number eight," I said. And to her, "I hope you find everything comfortable."

"Thank you," she said in a low voice. She seemed to pull herself away from me. She went upstairs with Mr. Smith.

Fred said gruffly, "Did you get a look at that shirt, Art? They got 'em down at the village, at Hammeyer's. Fifteen bucks apiece."

I whirled, knocked out of my mood and resenting it. But why take it out on Fred? He was just a big, bluff guy, honest and steady, and not too bright. He'd missed the meaning of the whole incident. All he'd noticed was a shirt.

About seven-thirty p.m. Smith came down and headed for the desk. He'd shaved off his mustache. His gray, casual jacket fitted snugly over a pair of trim shoulders, and he was still wear-

ing the shirt. He'd put a tie on for dinner.

"Not much of a room," he whispered. "Light in the bathroom's bad. Almost cut myself, taking this off." His fingers rubbed his upper lip, and I had the impression that he wanted to make sure I remembered the mustache.

I never argue with cranks. "I'll have the bulb changed." I said. "And if there's anything else you don't find satisfactory—"

Then she came over, upset, apologetic and confusing me more than ever. *"Please,"* she said to him. "It's all right, really it is. You're just tired, your cold makes you fussy." She gave me a quick, warm smile. "The room's perfect, and I do love the flowers." She put her arm through his and steered him across the lobby.

I watched them walk into the dining room. Harvey, my headwaiter, seated them in the far corner, where the shadows are heavy and the chairs are close. He puts the honeymooners there. Their knees touch, and after dinner they usually stroll in the pine grove, and then retire. The pines have their magic.

I figured Harvey had made a mistake, for once. Still, he hadn't seen them come in. He wasn't wondering about Smith's mustache, and whether he'd shaved it off or simply unpasted it.

After a couple of minutes I entered the dining room. The Smiths were still studying the menu, and I suggested the plank steak, eight dollars. She said she'd like it, and she asked whether we didn't have that small, delicious fish we'd served here a month ago.

That made me remember her. She'd been in with a group of women who'd come for some kind of reunion. After cocktails and lunch, they'd gone walking. When they returned, they were chattering about the sheer height of Bald Face Cliff, and one of them asked if anyone had ever fallen. They all laughed excitedly, and they kept saying their husbands would never forgive them, they'd promised to be home for dinner and they'd better hurry.

So I placed her now. I explained that the fish came from the lake, and we never knew when we'd have it. She said something about how beautiful the woods were, and I offered to give her a map showing the trails.

"I'd rather wander," she said. Smith croaked out, "Me, too. I hate plans." She went on. "I love to discover things. We're going picknicking tomorrow, we like to be by ourselves. I'm sure we'll find the perfect place, just by accident."

Smith glowered, and drummed his fingers on the table. He couldn't wait to get rid of me,

whereas she kept talking and practically begged me to stay.

I was puzzled. On my way out, I took Harvey aside and asked him to hold the Smiths for a while and not let them go upstairs. I stepped into my office and got a pass key.

I was convinced she was in serious trouble, but I had no idea what I was looking for in Number 8. I thought I might find a suitcase crammed with bank notes, and that next day I'd read about an absconding cashier. But both bags were unlocked. His, hers. Packed loosely, with the usual weekend stuff.

The bed was rumpled where somebody had lain down and been careless with cigarette ashes. In the bathroom, the wastepaper basket held a scattering of short hairs. I picked up a sampling. They were thick, glossy, and had obviously been snipped from a mustache. I held them to the light and examined their reddish cast. Then I put them in a hotel envelope and left.

Late that night I looked at the Smith car. The registration in the glove compartment read "George Smith, 1435—8th Street," and there was a stack of business cards belonging to George Smith, sales representative for the Ainsley Carpet Company. The trunk was locked, and there was a picnic basket lying on the rear seat.

I circled the hotel, and as I passed their room, I looked up. She was sleeping on the balcony, alone. She was wrapped up in blankets, and she seemed to be there for the night. I went to bed. For a long time, I kept thinking of her.

They had breakfast in their room. But weekends are busy and I had no time for more than a glimpse of them as they went off on their picnic. He was still wearing the green, checked shirt, open at the throat. She had on a yellow outfit with shorts, and her legs were smooth and slim. Her dark hair was brushed back, and even indoors it seemed to be blowing in the wind.

They returned late in the afternoon. She took the picnic basket up to their room, and he strolled over to the desk and bought cigarettes. There was nothing the matter with his voice.

"Nice place you got here," he said. "I'll bet there's a barrel of money in it." He lit a cigarette and puffed contentedly. "Plenty of headaches, too," he went on. "Cranks complaining about everything. Some people, you can't satisfy 'em."

I wondered whether he was apologizing for last night. I didn't think so. I felt he was building up to something, and I went along with him and pretended I had nothing to do except stand there and listen, and notice that his upper lip was tanned evenly, exactly the same as the rest of his face.

As if he guessed what I was thinking, he touched his lip. "I been lying in the sun all day, baking out that cold. Got a nice, even tan, didn't I?"

Presently Mrs. Smith joined us. She came over smiling, breathing contentment, and she slipped her arm through his. "George," she said, "I was waiting for you."

"Been talking," he said affably. "You know how I am, Olga. And I wanted to find out if our friend here had a map. I like to study out the geography."

Olga squeezed up to him. "George, you're the most exciting man I ever knew. One thing one day, and the next the opposite."

"Me?" he said, pleased and a bit bewildered. "Me, exciting? Say, maybe I am. Never know what I'm going to do next, do you?"

"Oh, yes I do," she said. "You're going up to dress for dinner. You've been wearing that same shirt ever since you've been here, and I'm tired of looking at it."

The incident bothered me. The way she'd jumped in when he'd asked about the map. The change in her manner, as if they'd come to some agreement. Whatever her problem had been, it no longer existed.

I saw them at intervals throughout the evening. Holding hands, talking earnestly. Walking in the pine grove. Returning together, his arm around her waist. I told myself she wouldn't sleep on the balcony tonight.

To my surprise, when I saw them in the dining room next morning, they weren't talking to each other. She looked haggard, and he had a nasty set to his mouth, he had his grouch back. He left the table ahead of her, and she got up quickly and ran after him. I found out later that they'd gone to the lake and changed into their bathing suits. He swam out to the raft and stayed there, while she remained on the beach. They didn't show up for lunch.

They returned separately. She avoided me and went straight upstairs, and he marched to the desk and asked for the bill. He checked the addition carefully. He muttered something about the price of the room and about eight bucks for a plank steak, but he didn't argue. He paid quietly enough, as if his only object was to get out of here.

"You work for a carpet company, don't you?" I said.

"I handle the Ainsley line."

"How'd you like to talk business?" I said.

He laughed uncomfortably. "Sure. Except that I'm on vacation now. No samples with me."

I needed new carpeting like I needed a hole in my head, but I couldn't let him leave here and never return. The first step was

to force him into making a sale. And it wouldn't cost me anything, because his name wasn't Smith, Olga wasn't his wife, and he didn't represent any rug company.

"Let's go in the bar," I said. "I'll buy you a drink."

He came unwillingly, which proved I was on the right track.

After ordering a couple of highballs, I said casually, "Maybe you noticed my carpeting's a little worn."

"The upstairs ones," he said. "They're fading, too, where the sun hits them. Now the dyes we use—" He stopped himself. "I keep forgetting I'm on vacation."

"You mean you'd turn down an order?" I said. "Mr. Smith, you're no salesman."

He flushed, and my remark jolted him. "Fact is," he said slowly, "I can't keep away from business. Been measuring up, with my eye, and I have a pretty fair idea how much carpeting you need. But why don't we wait a week or two?"

"Might change my mind," I said. "Right now, I'm willing to sign an open order. How about it?"

I could tell he was struggling with himself. Almost angrily, he got up and muttered something about getting his briefcase, be right back.

I waited. My flat statement that he was no salesman had done the trick. No matter what the consequences, he was going through with the role of George Smith, salesman.

He returned with a large, leather folder, and he dug up a set of order blanks and filled them out. He scrawled the name, George Smith. I felt smug as I signed the contract.

"How about a week from Tuesday?" he said. "I'll be in this territory and we can go over my samples."

"Fine," I said.

Then Olga came to the doorway. "George," she said, in a tight, anxious voice. "I'm ready."

He got up without smiling, said goodby to me and stamped off to the car. She followed, and I watched the bellhop stow the bags. The Smiths drove off stiffly, not speaking to each other. I stared at their departing car, and then I looked at my contract. The wild, impossible idea hit me suddenly, with a shock that made my heart rumble. Olga Smith had been here with two, separate men.

I had nightmares all week long. I was obsessed with the thought of a man with a mustache coming on Friday, and a different man leaving on Sunday, and I kept asking myself what had happened to the extra one. I had fantasies about a lover who looked like a husband. I hated her, and I thought about murder.

Two men who look alike—you could get away with it, among

strangers. Once you've made your husband shave his mustache, you're ready. You bring him to the edge of the cliff, you've been there before, you know how dangerous it is. Just a quick push, and it's over. No witnesses, no evidence except the lover who took his place. How can anybody guess you were with two men? And even if somebody did guess, how could he prove it?

During the daytime, however, I forgot about the Smiths. It was one of those bad weeks when everything goes wrong. There are mix-ups on reservations, the laundry doesn't come back on time, and the chef gets drunk. I was short on sleep, and the little rest that I had was fitful, jerky. I worried about the good name of the hotel, and its involvement with Mrs. George Smith and her lover, who had posed as a rug salesman.

Friday morning, when things finally slacked off, I took a shovel and drove to the spur of road near Bald Face. I parked and followed the trail that circles around the cliff and comes out at the bottom. There, I looked up. I seemed to hear a scream, I seemed to see someone totter at the edge, try to get his balance and pinwheel backwards. So real was my vision that I had to close my eyes to blot out the sight of a man falling on those sharp, jagged boulders.

It hadn't rained all week, and I suppose the rocks had bloodstains, but I didn't investigate. I walked to the flat, open space where the brook flows past a scattering of pines. I kept my eyes on the ground. He'd be buried where the soil was soft. Pine needles would be scattered over the grave, it wouldn't be hard to locate.

It wasn't. I stared at the recently disturbed soil, and I saw the bare patches where somebody had scooped up pine needles to pile here. I dug just deep enough to make sure. I left feeling a little sick, and I started the long climb up.

I drove straight to Fred's office, and walked in. He was playing solitaire with some sticky cards he'd salvaged from the hotel. He put them down and gave me his full attention.

"What's the trouble, Art?"

I sat down on the hard, wooden chair, and I wiped my forehead. "Give me a drink, Fred. I need it."

He handed me the bottle he keeps in a desk-drawer, and I took a long swig. "Fred," I said. "Ever seen your double?"

He snorted. "They say everybody's got a double. Not so you can't tell them apart if you look close, but good enough to fool a lot of people. Except a cop, of course. Why? Seen your double?"

"There's a fresh grave at the bottom of Bald Face, and the

body of George Smith, rug salesman, is buried there."

Fred gave me the look of a cop all set to hear a confession. "Better spell that out, Art," he said.

"Remember the couple with the dark glasses who registered a week ago?"

"Sure. You couldn't take your eyes off her."

"Mr. and Mrs. George Smith," I said. "He shaved off his mustache that evening, and the next day she took him to Bald Face and killed him, and then she returned with her lover. They look so alike that practically anybody would swear she was with one man all weekend, and that she never left his side. They drove off together Sunday afternoon, she and her lover, and I'll bet they went straight to the city and can prove it. Stopped at gas stations, and things like that. But Fred—the real Smith was killed on Saturday."

"Why would she kill him?"

"I don't know. Insurance, maybe."

"You found the body?"

"I located the grave. Fred, I know there were two men, because the one I spoke to on Saturday evening had never had a mustache, his upper lip was tanned too evenly. And thinking back, I can see the reasons for everything she did on Friday. She wouldn't let him register, because his handwriting could prove who he was. She wouldn't let him talk, because I'd remember the voice. But after the crime, she changed. She hated her husband, she wouldn't even sleep with him on Friday. But on Saturday she was in love, and everything was fine at first. Later, I guess, the strain of the murder began to tell."

Fred collected his cards and stacked them on his desk. "You've got a hell of an imagination, Art. How do you know George Smith isn't alive?"

"Call him," I said. "Here's his address."

Fred stared vacantly into space. Presently he sighed, picked up the phone and motioned me to listen in on the extension across the room. He called long distance and got the Smith number, and I heard her voice. Fred asked if she was Mrs. Smith and she said yes, and then he said he was Sheriff Logan and wanted to talk to her husband about something.

"He's not here," she said. Even on the phone, I caught her tension. "I haven't seen him all week."

"Why not?"

"Please," she said, choking up. "We've separated. I can't talk, I'm too upset."

"I'm trying to locate him. How about his business?"

"He works for Ainsley Carpet, but I called and they say he isn't there, they don't know where he is, they think he quit."

"You went on a picnic with

him Saturday. Where'd you go? What part of the woods?"

"I don't know, I didn't pay any attention. We just wandered."

"Yeah," said Fred. "Thanks." He hung up, and swung around in his chair. "By golly!" he said. He picked up the bottle and examined it, but he didn't drink. "Any idea who the lover is?" he asked. "If she has one?"

"No."

Fred got up and strode to the window. He stared at my car outside. "Borrow your shovel?" he asked.

He called at my office that evening. He stepped through the doorway and stood there, filling it with his big, bulky frame. "Found it," he said sourly. "Face is banged up pretty bad, pockets are empty. Still wearing that fifteen-dollar shirt, but nobody in the world can tell if he's the man who registered with her."

"Naturally," I said. "That was the plan."

"They must have figured the body wouldn't be found for a while. Maybe never. So she'll claim she was with her husband the whole weekend. And she'll claim that if anything happened to him, it happened after Sunday, when neither she nor her lover was anywhere near here. Some alibi, huh?"

"Except that I can prove the man who left on Sunday wasn't George Smith."

"How?"

I handed Fred the rug contract. He merely said, "Don't need new rugs, do you?"

"No, but look at the signature."

"Says George Smith."

"Exactly, but it's not his signature. I tricked him into selling me, and now he has to come back. Otherwise the company will say this isn't George Smith's writing, that somebody else made out the order, and then he's sunk."

"You and your theories."

I grinned. "He'll be here on Tuesday, and he'll do everything in the world to get this contract back. He'll have all kinds of excuses to cancel it. And you can stand behind those curtains, Fred, and listen."

Fred grunted. "I know you, Art. And when you sign up for a thousand dollars worth of rugs that you don't want, you're pretty sure of yourself. But a dead body doesn't prove a murder, and you're no detective."

"Wait and see, I said.

I was right.

On Tuesday, after Fred had slipped behind the curtains to the small supply room off my office, "Smith" arrived. Just as I'd expected, he breezed in and calmly asked me to tear up the contract.

I laughed. "Why?" I said.

"I couldn't tell you last week, but . switched firms. don't want Ainsley to get my business."

"So the important thing is to

tear up that contract," I said sarcastically. "Right?"

He nodded. "Sure."

"I think you have a different reason," I said. "You're not Smith, and the signature on this contract proves it. Smith is dead, they found his body at the foot of the cliff, and you killed him."

He frowned, and apparently decided to bluff it out. "I'm not Smith?" he said. "Look." He pulled out a driver's license and a social security card and identification papers of one George Smith, salesman for the Hamm Carpet Company. "That's my new firm," he stormed. "Take a look at those signatures and compare them with the one on the contract." He clamped his mouth tight and looked nasty. "And if you keep on with this kind of talk, I'll bring a damage suit that'll wreck you and your hotel, but good."

A big, doughy lump settled in the pit of my stomach. The signatures checked, he did work for Hamm Carpet, and he'd been working for them since yesterday.

"Sorry for the misunderstanding," I said feebly. "But when a salesman tries not to sell something, it looks queer, doesn't it? So why get so sore?"

"I'm particular about my customers," he said coldly. But his mouth dropped open and the anger drained out of him as Fred Logan stepped from behind the curtains.

"Bright boy," Fred said to me. "Thought he killed Smith, huh? Smith's here."

Smith sighed with relief. "I'm glad you overheard our little conversation, Sheriff, but I have no hard feelings. Let's forget the whole business."

"Can't forget it," Fred said. "I'm arresting you."

Smith stiffened. "What in hell for?"

"Murder. Of a man by the name of Tearl."

"Who's he?"

"Your double. Identified him from fingerprints."

"Is this a gag?" said Smith. "What are you jokers after?"

"I saw the man who checked in here on Friday," Fred said. "Wasn't you."

"I had a mustache," Smith said. "Anybody looks different when he shaves it off. Besides, I came with my wife on Friday and I was with her the whole time. And a lot of people saw me, including this character."

He gave me a look of contempt, but I smiled back. "Is your mustache red?" I asked.

Smith didn't like that one, and he didn't answer.

"Because," I went on, "I kept the hairs from Tearl's mustache, I have them in an envelope, and any lab technician can prove they're Tearl's, and not yours."

"There's a dead body, too," Fred added. "Can't talk me out of that."

Smith realized he was caught. "It was an accident," he said. "He picnicked with Olga and left her sleeping while he went to the cliff, and he got too close to the edge and slipped. I was afraid I'd be accused, so I buried him and told Olga what had happened. She agreed to let me take his place."

"Trouble is," Fred said, "you were there. And you bought a fifteen-dollar shirt on Saturday morning, at Hammeyer's. Green checks. Shows premeditation."

While Fred handcuffed him, I grabbed that contract.

Painstaking investigation traced Smith's actions on Friday and Saturday. He'd followed Olga and Tearl to the hotel, and next morning he bought clothes to duplicate Tearl's. That, and Smith's obvious jealousy, convicted him. But the D.A. brought no charges against Olga; the evidence against her was too thin.

Some day, I think, Olga will tell me. She'll say she was confused, mixed up, almost out of her mind under the constant urgings of this man who looked so exactly like her husband. She'll say she hardly knew what she was doing when she went away with him. He repelled her, but his uncanny resemblance gave him a powerful hold over her. She reached the point where she had to force some sort of climax.

Maybe. Maybe Tearl really had laryngitis, and maybe she did take a nap after their picnic, and wake up to find her husband telling her about an accident. If so, she was foolish, but also, she was loyal.

But maybe, driven by Tearl's insistent interference that was wrecking their lives, she and Smith planned the murder and she deliberately lured Tearl to his death. The truth is in her mind, and there's no external evidence beyond what I've set down. I can have faith in her, or not.

I don't know. But when she raises her dark, inscrutable eyes and presses her lips against mine, she seems to plead for my belief. She seems so innocent.

I don't know. I just hope I have no double.

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toast to victory

by...Lawrence G. Blochman

BARON KRAZNY bent down to wipe the tiny thread of blood from the still, pale forehead of his wife. Gently he arranged her head so that her white hair billowed out over the pillow. She was beautiful, he reflected. As he looked down at her with bitter, dry-eyed grief, he knew why he could find no tears. Even if the end had been less swift, less senseless, less futile, she would not have wanted to outlive the agony of the country she loved so much.

The door opened softly. Without turning, the Baron knew it was Stanislas. The other servants had fled in terror hours ago. Stanislas placed the candles near the bed. A wraith of a man, stooped with years, he breathed with difficulty.

"They are coming, Excellence," he announced. "Soldiers. They are coming up the hill on motorcycles."

The General was a man with a sense of humor — an unpleasant sense of humor. . . .

"The gate grille is locked, Stanislas?"

"Yes, Excellence."

"And you laid the fire in the dining hall?"

"Yes, Excellence. I followed your instructions exactly."

Baron Krazny prepares a rather deadly toast to another leader, as the Nazis sweep through Poland. The General, a gross man, will find the toast unusual.

"Thank you, Stanislas. I will go to meet them."

Baron Krazny straightened to his full height. He went slowly down the stairs into the garden.

The acrid smell of burned powder was gone now, but great, yawning craters gaped among the flower beds; the ancient lawns were like plowed fields. He did not look at the ruined outbuildings or the crumbled wing of the château or the uprooted trees, because he was watching gray-clad soldiers scramble through a breach in the stone wall, probing the shrubbery with their automatic rifles. Beyond them he could see the convoy coming up the hill.

Two armored cars clanked to a stop behind the locked gate. Baron Krazny walked to the heavy, wrought-iron grille and glanced at the soldiers in coal-scuttle helmets who sprang out. He ignored them, watching the approach of a third car bearing a bull-necked officer who wore the insignia of a general of artillery.

There was dignity in the Baron's manner as he bowed.

"My felicitations, General," he said. "I am glad you are here. I was curious to see a soldier who makes war on an old man and his wife."

The General frowned.

"You are lucky," he said. "I merely gave orders to clear the hilltop of artillery and observers."

"There were no troops here, General. There were only my wife and myself. Even my domestics have left. Your aviators must have noticed that, when they flew low to machine-gun us . . ."

"I am establishing headquarters here," interrupted the General. "Open the gate."

"You are not welcome here, I warn you."

"I do not ask favors. I give orders. And *I* warn *you* that we have a special routine for snipers. Are there any inside, Korporal?"

Two men had come down the driveway, holding Stanislas between them.

"Only this old man, my General," one of them said. "And there is a dead woman upstairs."

"My wife and I won't trouble you much longer," said Baron Krazny. "I have sent for a priest from the village, but he is delayed. He has been very busy these days."

"Aufmachen!" ordered the General.

A revolver exploded. The brass padlock dropped to the ground. The grille swung open.

"I regret," began the Baron.

"Halt's Maul!" roared the General. "Enough talk. Search him, Korporal. Then send him back with the other prisoners. No, don't send him back. I have a better idea." He ran the tip of his tongue between his thick

lips. His small, beady eyes crinkled at the corners in a smile. "You will dine with me tonight, Count. Or is it Duke?"

"I am Baron Krazny. But—"

"You will dine with me to drink a toast to Our Leader. You had better learn how, since he is also your Leader now." The General laughed at his joke. "Meanwhile, lock him up, Korporal. The old man, too. Lock them up with the dead woman."

Within an hour the lawns of the château had become a vast park of motorized units. The hooked cross of the Third Reich snapped and stiffened on the staff above the gateway, while inside the château all was bustle and efficiency. From a portable switchboard in the library, engineers were stringing wires through the stairways, to the tower where the radio mast had sprung up, to the roof where officers crawled with their range-finders, to the great salon where maps and papers covered the piano and marquetry tables, where the hob-nailed boots of dispatch-carriers tramped down the thick pile of the rugs.

Baron Krazny saw none of this. He was standing by his window, watching the sunset fade into twilight. He could see the ugly columns of steel monsters swarming over the countryside, rumbling along the roads, grinding and clanking across the fields, filling the air with a pall of dust and sound. He could hear the drone of a bombing squadron flying high above the smoke of burning villages, high enough to catch the last blaze of sunlight on their metallic wings. He could hear the rattle of automatic arms far down on the plain, and, occasionally, the whine of a shell.

As he watched, his shoulders sagged. He was an old man now, an old man who could not see. Even before darkness settled on the ruined land, a mist had dimmed his eyes. He could only hear the relentless sound of the tanks crawling past with a grim, grinding noise like the roar of the sea —a field-gray sea that was sweeping across the plain to engulf a dying nation. . . .

A dying nation? Baron Krazny's back suddenly straightened. His chin rose. Who was it who had once said, "Nations do not die"? It was true. During a thousand years of history, Poland had been torn asunder, crushed, ground under heel many times—but Poland had always lived. A nation lives in men's minds and in their hearts. Poland would not die this time either . . .!

"Stanislas!" Baron Krazny turned to the old man who had been kneeling by the bed, praying. "I think they will shell Jorowicz tonight. There are guns below the brow of the hill and they will direct the fire from the

château. Your daughters are in Jorowicz, Stanislas."

"Yes, Excellence. And my grandchildren. I should like to go to them."

"Try it, then. The vines outside the window will support your weight. The darkness will help you get through. Goodbye, Stanislas."

For the next twenty minutes the Baron stood listening to the desultory crackle of rifle fire. Then an orderly unlocked the door and announced:

"The General is waiting dinner."

The General, as a matter of fact, was not waiting dinner. When the Baron entered the dining hall, he was already up to his elbows in roast goose.

"Sit!" ordered the General. "I permit it."

The Baron looked at the usurper whose thick fingers were at that moment unfastening two buttons of his tunic. Red-jowled, his coarse, close-cropped gray hair bristling like steel wool, the man appeared particularly gross in the face of so much table finery—damask napery and gleaming Baccarat crystal. He was not like any German general the Baron had ever seen. Twenty-five years ago they were aristocrats; in this war, apparently, they were politicians, minor military men with good party affiliations. . . .

"Drink!" ordered the General.

So they discovered the wine cellar, too!

"Fill the glasses!" ordered the General, banging the heel of a bottle down in front of Baron Krazny.

The Baron stiffened. "You are ruining the finest vintages of your own Fatherland," he said. "You have stirred up the dregs. An officer of the Reich in 1914 would have known how to appreciate an old Johannisberger."

"Times change," the General declared. "That's the trouble with your people. They don't know times change. Only this morning we encountered cavalry. In 1939, horses—against tanks and airplanes!" The General laughed heartily. "Cavalry. They didn't even have sense enough to surrender. We had to wipe them out."

"Polish cavalry once saved Europe from the Turks," said the Baron through white lips. "My ancestors rode with John Sobiesky before Vienna."

"History!" snorted the General. "What good is history against motorized artillery? What good is Sobiesky against Heinkels and Dorniers?" He paused to give vent to a bass eructation. He shivered slightly and rebuttoned his tunic. "Light the fire!" he ordered.

The Baron did not move.

"Light the fire!" repeated the General. "This mausoleum of yours is cold and drafty."

The Baron bowed. "Gladly, my General," he said, as he arose and stepped to the fireplace.

Kneeling before the hearth, he saw at once that Stanislas had carried out his instructions. Had he not known it was there, he would not have seen the dynamite—the dynamite which remained after they had blasted stumps for the new fields last Spring. Concealed by bundles of faggots, it was buried in the pile of heavy logs. There was enough of it to finish what the Luftwafe had missed. . . .

Baron Krazny struck a match, sought the end of the fuse, stepped back to the table.

"You have not yet drunk a toast to our Leader," said the General, struggling to his feet, his eyes red. "DRINK! HEIL VICTORY!"

Baron Krazny raised his glass. He stood erect. Above the crackle of the faggots he could hear the fuse sputtering.

"HAIL, VICTORY!" he echoed.

the resurrection of father brown

by . . . G. K. Chesterton

Hours after he had "died," Father Brown realized he was astonished at not having been knocked on the head.

THERE was a brief period during which Father Brown enjoyed, or rather did not enjoy, something like fame. He was a nine days' wonder in the newspapers; he was even a common topic of controversy in the weekly reviews; his exploits were narrated eagerly and inaccurately in any number of clubs and drawing-rooms, especially in America. Incongruous and indeed incredible as it may seem, to anyone who knew him, his adventures as a detective were even made the subject of short stories appearing in magazines.

Strangely enough, this wandering limelight struck him in the most obscure, or at least the most remote of his many places of residence. He had been sent out to officiate, as something between a missionary and a parish priest, in one of those sections of the northern coast of South America, where strips of country still cling insecurely to European powers, or are continually threatening to become independent republics, under the gigantic shadow of President Monroe. The population was red and

A Kansas City newspaperman who had been born Saul Snaith and Alvarez, leader of the local iconoclasts, help to complicate the life of Father Brown, temporarily officiating "in one of those sections of the northern coast of South America where strips of country still cling insecurely to European powers."

brown with pink spots; that is, it was Spanish-American, and largely Spanish-American-Indian, but there was a considerable and increasing infiltration of Americans of the northern sort, Englishmen, Germans and the rest.

The trouble seems to have begun when one of these visitors, very recently landed and very much annoyed at having lost one of his bags, approached the first building of which he came in sight; which happened to be the mission-house and chapel attached to it; in front of which ran a long veranda and a long row of stakes, up which were trained the black twisted vines, their square leaves red with autumn. Behind them, also in a row, a number of human beings sat almost as rigid as the stakes and colored in some fashion like the vines. For while their broad brimmed hats were as black as their unblinking eyes, the complexions of many of them might have been made out of the dark red timber of those transatlantic forests. Many of them were smoking very long thin black cigars; and in all that group the smoke was almost the only moving thing. The visitor would probably have described them as natives, though some of them were very proud of Spanish blood. But he was not one to draw any fine distinctions between Spaniards and Red Indians, being rather disposed to dismiss people from the scene when once he had convicted them of being native to it.

He was a newspaper man from Kansas City, a lean, light-haired man with what Meredith called an adventurous nose; one could almost fancy it found its way by feeling its way and moved like the proboscis of an ant-eater. His name was Snaith; and his parents, after some obscure meditation, had called him Saul; a fact which he had the good feeling to conceal as far as possible. Indeed, he had ultimately compromised by calling himself Paul; though by no means for the same reason that had affected the Apostle of the Gentiles. On the contrary, so far as he had any views on such things, the name of the persecutor would have been more appropriate; for he regarded organized religion with the conventional contempt which can be learnt more easily from Ingersoll than from Voltaire. And this was, as it happened, the not very important side of his character when he turned towards the mission station and the groups in front of the veranda. Something in their shameless repose and indifference inflamed his own fury of efficiency; and as he could get no particular answer to his first questions, he began to do all the talking himself.

Standing out there in the

strong sunshine, a spick and span figure in his Panama hat and neat clothes, his grip-sack held in a steely grip, he began to shout at the people in the shadow. He began to explain to them very loudly why they were lazy and filthy and bestially ignorant and lower than the beasts that perish, in case this problem should have previously exercised their minds. In his opinion, it was the deleterious influence of Priests that had made them so miserably poor and so hopelessly oppressed that they were able to sit in the shade and smoke and do nothing.

"And a mighty soft crowd you must be at that," he said, "to be bullied by these stuck-up josses because they walk about in their mitres and their tiaras and their gold copes and other glad rags, looking down on everybody else like dirt—being bamboozled by crowns and canopies and sacred umbrellas like a kid at a pantomime; just because a pompous old High Priest of Mumbo-Jumbo looks as if he was the lord of the earth. What about you? What do you look like, you poor simps? I tell you that's why you're way-back in barbarism and can't read or write and—"

At this point the High Priest of Mumbo-Jumbo came in an undignified hurry out of the door of the mission house, not looking very like a lord of the earth, but rather like a bundle of black second-hand clothes buttoned round a short bolster in the semblance of a guy. He was not wearing his tiara, supposing him to possess one, but a shabby broad hat not very dissimilar from those of the Spanish Indians, and it was thrust to the back of his head with a gesture of botheration. He seemed just about to speak to the motionless natives when he caught sight of the stranger and said quickly:

"Oh, can I be of any assistance? Would you like to come inside?"

Mr. Paul Snaith came inside; and it was the beginning of a considerable increase of that journalist's information on many things. Presumably his journalistic instinct was stronger than his prejudices, as, indeed, it often is in a clever journalist; and he asked a good many questions the answers to which interested him and surprised him. He discovered that the Indians could read and write, for the simple reason that the priest had taught them; but that they did not read or write any more than they could help, from a natural preference for more direct communications. He learned that these strange people, who sat about in heaps in the veranda without stirring a hair, could work quite hard on their own patches of land; especially those of them who were more than half Spanish; and he learned with still

more astonishment that they all had patches of land that were really their own. That much was part of the stubborn tradition that seemed quite native to natives. But in that also the priest had played a certain part; and by doing so had taken perhaps what was his first and last part in politics, if it was only local politics.

There had recently swept through that region one of those fevers of atheist and almost anarchist Radicalism which break out periodically in countries of the Latin culture; generally beginning in a secret society and generally ending in a civil war and in very little else. The local leader of the iconoclastic party was a certain Alvarez, a rather picturesque adventurer of Portuguese nationality but, as his enemies said, of partly Negro origin, the head of any number of lodges and temples of initiation of the sort that in such places clothe even atheism with something mystical. The leader on the more conservative side was a much more commonplace person, a very wealthy man named Mendoza, the owner of many factories and quite respectable, but not very exciting. It was the general opinion that the cause of law and order would have been entirely lost if it had not adopted a more popular policy of its own, in the form of securing land for the peasants; and this movement had mainly originated from the little mission station of Father Brown.

While he was talking to the journalist, Mendoza, the Conservative leader, came in. He was a stout, dark man, with a bald head like a pear and a round body also like a pear; he was smoking a very fragrant cigar, but he threw it away, perhaps a little theatrically, when he came into the presence of the priest, as if he had been entering church; and bowed with a curve that in so corpulent a gentleman seemed quite improbable. He was always exceedingly serious in his social gestures, especially towards religious institutions. He was one of those laymen who are much more ecclesiastical than ecclesiastics. It embarassed Father Brown a good deal, especially when carried thus into private life.

"I think I am an anti-clerical," Father Brown would say with a faint smile, "but there wouldn't be half so much clericalism if they would only leave things to the clerics."

"Why, Mr. Mendoza," exclaimed the journalist with a new animation, "I think we have met before. Weren't you at the Trade Congress in Mexico last year?"

The heavy eyelids of Mr. Mendoza showed a flutter of recognition, and he smiled in his slow way. "I remember."

"Pretty big business done there in an hour or two," said Snaith

with relish. "Made a good deal of difference to you, too, I guess."

"I have been very fortunate," said Mendoza modestly.

"Don't you believe it!" cried the enthusiastic Snaith. "Good fortune comes to the people who know when to catch hold; and you caught hold good and sure. But I hope I'm not interrupting your business?"

"Not at all," said the other. "I often have the honor of calling on the padre for a little talk. Merely for a little talk."

It seemed as if this familiarity between Father Brown and a successful and even famous man of business completed the reconciliation between the priest and the practical Mr. Snaith. He felt, it might be supposed, a new respectability to clothe the station and the mission, and was ready to overlook such occasional reminders of the existence of religion as a chapel and a presbytery can seldom wholly avoid. He became quite enthusiastic about the priest's programme—at least on its secular and social side; and announced himself ready at any moment to act in the capacity of live wire for its communication to the world at large. And it was at this point that Father Brown began to find the journalist rather more troublesome in his sympathy than in his hostility.

Mr. Paul Snaith set out vigorously to feature Father Brown. He sent long and loud eulogies on him across the continent to his newspaper in the Middle West. He took snapshots of the unfortunate cleric in the most commonplace occupations and exhibited them in gigantic photographs in the gigantic Sunday papers of the United States. He turned his sayings into slogans; and was continually presenting the world with "A Message from the reverend gentleman in South America." Any stock less strong and strenuously receptive than the American race would have become very much bored with Father Brown. As it was, he received handsome and eager offers to go on a lecturing tour in the States; and when he declined the terms were raised with expressions of respectful wonder. A series of stories about him, like the stories of Sherlock Holmes, were by the instrumentality of Mr. Snaith, planned out and put before the hero with requests for his assistance and encouragement. As the priest found they had started, he could offer no suggestion except that they should stop. And this turn was taken by Mr. Snaith as the text for a discussion on whether Father Brown should disappear temporarily over a cliff, in the manner of Dr. Watson's hero. To all these demands the priest had patiently to reply in writing, saying that he would consent on such terms to the temporary cessation of the

stories begging that a considerable interval might occur before they began again. The notes he wrote grew shorter and shorter; and as he wrote the last of them, he sighed.

Needless to say, this strange boom in the North reacted on the little outpost in the South where he had expected to live in so lonely an exile. The considerable English and American population already on the spot began to be proud of possessing so widely advertised a person. American tourists, of the sort who land with a loud demand for Westminster Abbey, landed on that distant coast with a loud demand for Father Brown. They were within measurable distance of running excursion trains named after him, and bringing crowds to see him as if he were a public monument. He was especially troubled by the active and ambitious new traders and shopkeepers of the place, who were perpetually pestering him to try their wares and to give them testimonials. Even if the testimonials were not forthcoming, they would prolong the correspondence for the purpose of collecting autographs. As he was a good-natured person they got a good deal of what they wanted out of him; and it was in answer to a particular request from a Frankfort wine-merchant named Eckstein that he wrote hastily a few words on a card, which were to prove a terrible turning point in his life.

Eckstein was a fussy little man with fuzzy hair and pince-nez, who was wildly anxious that the priest should not only try some of his celebrated medicinal port, but should let him know where and when he would drink it in acknowledging its receipt. The priest was not particularly surprised at the request, for he was long past surprise at the lunacies of advertisement. So he scribbled something down and turned to other business, which seemed a little more sensible. He was again interrupted by a note from no less a person than his political enemy, Alvarez, asking him to come to a conference at which it was hoped that a compromise on an outstanding question might be reached; and suggesting an appointment that evening at cafe just outside the walls of the little town. To this also he sent a message of acceptance by the rather florid and military messenger who was waiting for it; and then, having an hour or two before him, sat down to attempt to get through a little of his own legitimate business. At the end of the time he poured himself out a glass of Mr. Eckstein's remarkable wine and, glancing at the clock with a humorous expression, drank it and went out into the night.

Strong moonlight lay on the little Spanish town, so that when

he came to the picturesque gateway, with its rather rococo arch and the fantastic fringe of palms beyond it, it looked rather like a scene in a Spanish opera. One long leaf of palm with jagged edges, black against the moon, hung down on the other side of the arch, visible through the archway, and had something of the look of the jaw of a black crocodile. The fancy would not have lingered in his imagination but for something else that caught his naturally alert eye. The air was deathly still, and there was not a stir of wind; but he distinctly saw the pendent palm-leaf move.

He looked around him and realized that he was alone. He had left the last houses behind, which were mostly closed and shuttered, and was walking between two long blank walls built of large and shapeless but flattened stones, tufted here and there with the queer prickly weeds of the region—walls which ran parallel all the way to the gateway. He could not see the lights of the cafe outside the gate; probably it was too far away. Nothing could be seen under the arch but a wider expanse of large-flagged pavement, pale in the moon, with the straggling prickly pear here and there. He had a strong sense of smell of evil; he felt queer physical oppression; but he did not think of stopping. His courage, which was considerable, was perhaps even less strong a part of him than his curiosity. All his life he had been led by an intellectual hunger for the truth, even of trifles. He often controlled it in the name of proportion; but it was always there. He walked straight through the gateway; and on the other side a man sprang like a monkey out of the treetop and struck at him with a knife. At the same moment another man came crawling swiftly along the wall and, whirling a cudgel round his head, brought it down. Father Brown turned, staggered, and sank in a heap; but as he sank there dawned on his round face an expression of mild and immense surprise.

There was living in the same little town at this time another young American, particularly different from Mr. Paul Snaith. His name was John Adams Race, and he was an electrical engineer, employed by Mendoza to fit out the old town with all the new conveniences. He was a figure far less familiar in satire and international gossip than that of the American journalist. Yet, as a matter of fact, America contains a million men of the moral type of Race to one of the moral type of Snaith. He was exceptional in being exceptionally good at his job, but every other way he was very simple. He had begun life as a druggist's assistant in a Western village and risen by

sheer work and merit; but he still regarded his home town as the natural heart of the habitable world. He had been taught a very Puritan or purely evangelical sort of Christianity from the Family Bible at his mother's knee; and in so far as he had time to have any religion, that was still his religion. Amid all the dazzling lights of the latest and even wildest discoveries, when he was at the very edge and extreme of experiment, working miracles of light and sound like a god creating new stars and solar systems, he never for a moment doubted that the things "back home" were the best things in the world; his mother and the Family Bible and the quiet and quaint morality of his village. He had as serious and noble a sense of the sacredness of his mother as if he had been a frivolous Frenchman. He was quite sure the Bible religion was really the right thing; only he vaguely missed it wherever he went in the modern world.

He could hardly be expected to sympathize with the religious externals of Catholic countries; and in a dislike of mitres and croziers he sympathized with Mr. Snaith, though not in so cocksure a fashion. He had no liking for the public bowings and scrapings of Mendoza, and certainly no temptation to the masonic mysticism of the atheist Alvarez. Perhaps all that semi-tropical life was too colored for him, shot with Indian red and Spanish gold. Anyhow, when he said there was nothing to touch his home town, he was not boasting. He really meant that there was somewhere something plain and unpretentious and t o u c h i n g, which he really respected more than anything else in the world. Such being the mental attitude of John Adams Race in a South American station, there had been growing on him for some time a curious feeling, which contradicted all his prejudices and for which he could not account. For the truth was this: that the only thing he had ever met in his travels that in the least reminded him of the old woodpile and the provincial proprieties and the Bible on his mother's knee was (for some inscrutable reason) the round face and black clumsy umbrella of Father Brown.

He found himself insensibly watching that commonplace and even comic black figure as it went bustling about; watching it with an almost morbid fascination; as if it were a walking riddle or contradiction. He had found something he could not help liking in the heart of everything he hated; it was as if he had been horribly tormented by lesser demons and then found that the Devil was quite an ordinary person.

Thus it happened that, looking out of his window on that moonlit night, he saw the Devil go by,

the demon of unaccountable blamelessness, in his broad black hat and long black coat, shuffling along the street towards the gateway, and saw it with an interest which he could not himself understand. He wondered where the priest was going, and what he was really up to; and remained gazing out into the moonlit street long after the little black figure had passed. And then he saw something else that intrigued him further. Two other men whom he recognized passed across his window as across a lighted stage. A sort of blue limelight of the moon ran in a spectral halo round the big bush of hair, that stood erect on the head of little Eckstein, the wine-seller, and it outlined a taller and darker figure with an eagle profile and a queer old-fashioned and very topheavy black hat, which seemed to make the whole outline still more bizarre, like a shape in a shadow pantomime. Race rebuked himself for allowing the moon to play such tricks with his fancy; for on a second glance he recognized the black Spanish side-whiskers and high-featured face of Dr. Calderonk, a worthy medical man of the town, whom he had once found attending professionally on Mendoza. Still, there was something in the way the men were whispering to each other and peering up the street that struck him as peculiar. On a sudden impulse he leapt over the low window-sill and himself went bareheaded up the road, following their trail. He saw them disappear under the dark archway; and a moment after there came a dreadful cry from beyond; curiously loud and piercing, and all the more blood-curdling to Race because it said something very distinctly in some tongue that he did not know.

The next moment there was a rushing of feet, more cries and then a confused roar of rage or grief that shook the turrets and tall palm trees of the place; there was a movement in the mob that had gathered, as if they were sweeping backwards through the gateway. And then the dark archway resounded with a new voice, this time intelligible to him and falling with the note of doom, as someone shouted through the gateway:

"Father Brown is dead!"

He never knew what prop gave way in his mind, or why something on which he had been counting suddenly failed him; but he ran towards the gateway and was just in time to meet his countryman, the journalist Snaith, coming out of the dark entrance, deadly pale and snapping his fingers nervously.

"It's quite true," said Snaith, with something which for him approached to reverence. "He's a goner. The doctor's been looking at him, and there's no hope. Some of these damned people

clubbed him as he came through the gate—God knows why. It'll be a great loss to the place."

Race did not or perhaps could not reply, but ran on under the arch to the scene beyond. The small black figure lay where it had fallen on the wilderness of wide stones starred here and there with green thorn; and the great crowd was being kept back, chiefly by the mere gestures of one gigantic figure in the foreground. For there were many there who swayed hither and thither at the mere movement of his hand, as if he had been a magician.

Alvarez, the dictator and demagogue, was a tall, swaggering figure, always rather flamboyantly clad, and on this occasion he wore a green uniform with embroideries like silver snakes crawling all over it, with an order round his neck hung on a very vivid maroon ribbon. His close curling hair was already grey, and in contrast his complexion, which his friends called olive and his foes octoroon, looked almost literally golden, as if it were a mask molded in gold. But his large-featured face, which was powerful and humorous, was at this moment properly grave and grim. He had been waiting, he explained, for Father Brown at the cafe when he had heard a rustle and a fall and, coming out, had found the corpse lying on the flagstones.

"I know what some of you are thinking," he said, looking around proudly, "and if you are afraid of me, as you are, I will say it for you. I am an atheist; I have no god to call on for those who will not take my word. But I tell you in the name of every root of honor that may be left to a soldier and a man, that I had no part in this. If I had the men here that did it, I would rejoice to hang them on that tree."

"Naturally we are glad to hear you say so," said old Mendoza stiffly and solemnly, standing by the body of his fallen coadjutor. "This blow has been too appalling for us to say what else we feel at present. I suggest that it will be more decent and proper if we remove my friend's body and break up this irregular meeting. I understand," he added gravely to the doctor, "that there is unfortunately no doubt."

"There is no doubt," said Dr. Calderon.

John Race went back to his lodgings sad and with a singular sense of emptiness. It seemed impossible that he should miss a man whom he never knew. He learned that the funeral was to take place next day; for all felt that the crisis should be past as quickly as possible, for fear of riots that were hourly growing more probable. When Snaith had seen the row of Red Indians sitting in the veranda, they might

have been a row of Ancient Aztec images carved in red wood. But he had not seen them as they were when they heard that the priest was dead.

Indeed they would certainly have risen in revolution and lynched the republican leader, if they had not been immediately blocked by direct necessity of behaving respectfully to the coffin of their own religious leader. The actual assassins, whom it would have been most natural to lynch, seemed to have vanished into thin air. Nobody knew their names; and nobody would ever know whether the dying man had even seen their faces. That strange look of surprise that was apparently his last look on earth, might have been the recognition of their faces. Alvarez repeated violently that it was no work of his, and attended the funeral, walking behind the coffin in his splendid silver and green uniform with a sort of bravado of reverence.

Behind the veranda a flight of stone steps scaled a very steep green bank, fenced by a cactus-hedge; and up this the coffin was laboriously lifted to the ground above; and placed temporarily at the foot of the great gaunt crucifix that dominated the road and guarded the consecrated ground. Below in the road were great seas of people lamenting and telling their beads; an orphan population that had lost a father. Despite all these symbols that were provocative enough to him, Alvarez behaved with restraint and respect; and all would have gone well, as Race told himself, had the others only let him alone.

Race told himself bitterly that old Mendoza had always looked like an old fool and had now very conspicuously and completely behaved like an old fool. By a custom common in simpler societies, the coffin was left open and the face uncovered, bringing the pathos to the point of agony for all those simple people. This, being consonant to tradition, need have done no harm; but some officious person had added to it the custom of the French freethinkers, of having speeches by the graveside. Mendoza proceeded to make a speech; a rather long speech, and the longer it was the lower and lower sank John Race's spirits and sympathies with the religious ritual involved. A list of saintly attributes, apparently of the most antiquated sort, was rolled out with the dilatory dullness of an after-dinner speaker who does not know how to sit down. That was bad enough; but Mendoza had also the ineffable stupidity to start reproaching and even taunting his political opponents. In three minutes he had succeeded in making a scene; and a very extraordinary scene it was.

"We may well ask," he said, looking around him pompously,

"we may well ask where such virtues can be found among those who have madly abandoned the creed of their fathers. It is when we have atheists among us, atheist leaders, nay, sometimes even atheist rulers, that we find their infamous philosophy bearing fruit in crimes like this. If we ask who murdered this holy man, we shall assuredly find—"

Africa of the forests looked out of the eyes of Alvarez the hybrid adventurer; and Race fancied he could see suddenly that the man could not control himself to the end; one might guess that all his "illuminated" transcendentalism had a touch of magic. Anyhow, Mendoza could not continue, for Alvarez had sprung up and was shouting back at him and shouting him down, with infinitely superior lungs.

"Who murdered him?" he roared. "Your God murdered him! His own God murdered him! According to you, he murders all his faithful and foolish servants—as he murdered that one," and he made a violent gesture, not towards the coffin but the crucifix.

Seeming to control himself a little, he went on in a tone still angry but more argumentative; "I don't believe it, but you do. Isn't it better to have no God than one that robs you in this fashion? I at least am not afraid to say that there is none. There is no power in all this blind and brainless universe that can hear your prayer or return your friend. Though you beg heaven to raise him, he will not rise. Though I dare heaven to raise him, he will not rise. Here and now I will put it to the test—I defy the God who is not there to waken the man who sleeps forever."

There was a shock of silence, and the demagogue had made his sensation.

"We might have known," cried Mendoza in a thick gobbling voice, "when we allowed such men as you—"

A new voice cut into his speech; a high and shrill voice with a Yankee accent.

"Stop! Stop!" cried Snaith the journalist, "something's up! I swear I saw him move."

He went racing up the steps and rushed to the coffin, while the mob below swayed with indescribable frenzies. The next moment, he had turned a face of amazement over his shoulder and made a signal with his fingers to Dr. Calderon, who hastened forward to confer with him. When the two men stepped away again from the coffin, all could see that the position of the head had altered. A roar of excitement rose from the crowd and seemed to stop suddenly, as if cut off in mid-air; for the priest in the coffin gave a groan and raised himself on one elbow, looking with bleared and blinking eyes at the crowd.

John Adams Race, who had hitherto known only miracles of science, never found himself able in after years to describe the topsy-turveydom of the next few days. He seemed to have burst out of the world of time and space; and to be living in the impossible. In half an hour the whole of that town and district had been transformed into something never known for a thousand years; a medieval people turned to a mob of monks by a staggering miracle; a Greek city where the god had descended among men. Thousands prostrated themselves in the road; hundreds took vows on the spot; and even the outsiders, like the two Americans, were able to think and speak of nothing but the prodigy. Alvarez himself was shaken, as well he might be; and sat down, with his head upon his hands.

And in the midst of all this tornado of beatitude was a little man struggling to be heard. His voice was small and faint, and the noise was deafening. He made weak little gestures that seemed more those of irritation than anything else. He came to the edge of the parapet above the crowd, waving it to be quiet with movements rather like the flap of the short wings of a penguin. There was something a little more like a lull in the noise; and then Father Brown for the first time reached the utmost stretch of the indignation that he could launch against his children.

"Oh, you silly people," he said in a high and quavering voice. "Oh, you silly, silly people."

Then he suddenly seemed to pull himself together, made a bolt for the steps with his more normal gait, and began hurriedly to descend.

"Where are you going, Father?" said Mendoza with more than his usual veneration.

"To the telegraph office," said Father Brown hastily. "What? No, of course it's not a miracle. Why should there be a miracle? Miracles are not so cheap as all that."

And he came tumbling down the steps, the people flinging themselves before him to implore his blessing.

"Bless you, bless you," said Father Brown hastily, "God bless you all and give you more sense."

And he scuttled away with extraordinary rapidity to the telegraph office, where he wired to his Bishop's secretary, "There is some mad story about a miracle here; hope his lordship not give authority. Nothing in it."

As he turned away from this effort, he tottered a little with the reaction, and John Race caught him by the arm.

"Let me see you home," he said, "you deserve more than these people are giving you."

John Race and the priest were

seated in the presbytery; the table was still piled up with the papers with which the latter had been wrestling that afternoon; the bottle of wine and the emptied wine-glass still stood where he had left them.

"And now," said Father Brown almost grimly, "I can begin to think."

"I shouldn't think too hard just yet," said the American. "You must be wanting a rest. Besides, what are you going to think about?"

"I have pretty often had the task of investigating murders, as it happens," said Father Brown. "Now I have got to investigate my own murder."

"If I were you," said Race, "I should take a little wine first."

Father Brown stood up and filled himself another glass, lifted it, looked thoughtfully into vacancy and put it down again. Then he sat down once more and said:

"Do you know what I felt like when I died? You may not believe it, but my feeling was one of overwhelming astonishment."

"Well," answered Race, "I suppose you were astonished at being knocked on the head."

Father Brown leaned over to him and said in a low voice:

"I was astonished at not being knocked on the head."

Race looked at him for a moment as if he thought the knock on the head had been only too effective; but he only said: "What do you mean?"

"I mean that when that man brought his bludgeon down with a great swipe, it stopped at my head and did not even touch it. In the same way the other fellow made as if to strike me with a knife, but he never gave me a scratch. It was just like play-acting. I think it was. But then followed the extraordinary thing."

He looked thoughtfully at the papers on the table for a moment and then went on:

"Though I had not even been touched with knife or stick, I began to feel my legs doubling up under me and my very life failing. I knew I was being struck down by something, but it was not by those weapons. Do you know what I think it was?"

And he pointed to the wine on the table.

Race picked up the wine-glass and looked at it and smelt it.

"I think you are right," he said. "I began as a druggist and studied chemistry. I couldn't say for certain without an analysis, but I think there's something very unusual in this stuff. There are drugs by which the Asiatics produce a temporary sleep that looks like death."

"Quite so," said the priest calmly. "The whole of this miracle was faked, for some reason or other. That funeral scene was staged—and timed. I think it is part of that raving madness of

publicity that has got hold of Snaith; but I can hardly believe he would go quite so far, merely for that. After all, it's one thing to make copy out of me and run me as a sort of sham Sherlock Holmes, and—"

Even as the priest spoke his face altered. His blinking eyelids shut suddenly and he stood up as if he were choking. Then he put one wavering hand as if groping his way towards the door.

"Where are you going?" asked the other in some wonder.

"If you ask me," said Father Brown, who was quite white, "I was going to pray. Or rather, to praise."

"I'm not sure I understand. What is the matter with you?"

"I was going to praise God for having so strangely and so incredibly saved me—saved me by an inch."

"Of course," said Race. "I am not of your religion; but believe me, I have religion enough to understand that. Of course you would thank God for saving you from death."

"No," said the priest. "Not from death. From disgrace."

The other sat staring; and the priest's next words broke out of him with a sort of cry.

"And if it had only been my disgrace! But it was the disgrace of all I stand for; the disgrace of the Faith that they went about to encompass. What it might have been! The most huge and horrible scandal ever launched against us, since the last lie was choked in the throat of Titus Oates."

"What on earth are you talking about?" demanded his companion.

"Well, I had better tell you at once," said the priest; and sitting down, he went on more composedly: "It came to me in a flash when I happened to mention Snaith and Sherlock Holmes. Now I happen to remember what I wrote about his absurd scheme; it was the natural thing to write, and yet I think they had ingeniously maneuvered me into writing just those words. They were something like 'I am ready to die and come to life again like Sherlock Holmes, if that is the best way.' And the moment I thought of that, I realized that I had been made to write all sorts of things of that kind, all pointing to the same idea. I wrote, as if to an accomplice, saying that I would drink the drugged wine at a particular time. Now, don't you see?"

Race sprang to his feet still staring. "Yes," he said, "I think I began to see."

"They would have boomed the miracle. Then they would have bust up the miracle. And what is the worst, they would have proved that I was in the conspiracy. It would have been our sham miracle. That's all there is to it;

and about as near hell as you and I will ever be, I hope."

Then he said after a pause, in quite a mild voice:

"They certainly would have got quite a lot of good copy out of me."

Race looked at the table and said darkly: "How many of these brutes were in it?"

Father Brown shook his head. "More than I like to think of," he said; "but I hope some of them were only tools. Alvarez might think that all's fair in war, perhaps; he has a queer mind. I'm very much afraid that Mendoza is an old hypocrite; I never trusted him and he hated my action in an industrial matter. But all that will wait; I have only got to thank God for the escape. And especially that I wired at once to the Bishop."

John Race appeared to be very thoughtful.

"You've told me a lot I didn't know," he said at last, "and I feel inclined to tell you the only thing you don't know. I can imagine how those fellows calculated well enough. They thought any man alive, waking up in a coffin to find himself canonized like a saint, and made into a walking miracle for everyone to admire, would be swept along with his worshippers and accept the crown of glory that fell on him out of the sky. And I reckon their calculation was pretty practical psychology, as men go. I've seen all sorts of men in all sorts of places; and I tell you frankly I don't believe there's one man in a thousand who could wake up like that with all his wits about him; and while he was still almost talking in his sleep, would have the sanity and the simplicity and the humility to—" He was much surprised to find himself moved, and his level voice wavering.

Father Brown was gazing abstractedly, and in a rather cock-eyed fashion, at the bottle on the table. "Look here," he said, "what about a bottle of real wine?"

the corpse in a suit of armor

by . . . Poul Anderson

A beautifully impossible story about a really impossible murder. . . .

A LITTLE north of Hibbing you are on the edge of the great forests. Behind you lie the iron mines and the memory of iron men in the old days; ahead is a roadless reach of woods, lakes, fish leaping at sunrise and deer between the pines and the ghosts of brown folk who hunted here in the oldest days of all.

But the few hundred people in and around Two Beavers are working men in a working world. You do not look for romantic irrationalities among them. You most certainly do not look for a knight in full armor.

Sheriff Sworsky blinked at the phone. "Huh?"

The receiver gabbled at him.

"All right, all right, I'll be right over, Mr. Clayborne. And say—" this was to a score of women listening in on the party line—"everybody stay off those grounds, hear me? If anybody comes bothering me and, uh, messing up clues, so help me, I'll run him in . . . Okay, Mr. Clayborne."

He hung up and looked around. Dr. John Koskelainen, who had dropped over for a

Poul Anderson, better known to the many of you (we hope) who also read FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, *introduces us to a new personality in crime detection, Dr. John Koskelainen, for whom great things can be prophesized. The few hundred people in Two Beavers are working men in a working world. Who'd expect to find a knight in full armor in such country—and a very dead knight?*

game of checkers, lifted shaggy brows above his pipe. The sheriff's wife stuck her head in from the kitchen and asked what was the matter.

Bernard Sworsky shook his head, slowly, and his voice dragged out of him: "It's a dead man up at the Clayborne place. Dressed in armor."

"Well, good heavens," said his wife. "Who?"

"He didn't say. You better come along, Doc."

"I always said there was strange goings on at that lodge," declared his wife. "You be back by seven, if you can, or supper will get cold." Her eyes gleamed at the phone and the neighborhood talk which must already be making the lines smoke.

Sworsky gave his sagging belt a hitch and started out the door. Koskelainen trotted after him, a small hooknosed man with blue eyes and lank brown hair. "Stop by my house, Bernie," he said. "I have to fetch my bag."

"Yeah, sure." Sworsky shook his head again. "Clayborne said he'd been shot. Shot dead. But—"

"I wouldn't trust a layman to recognize death," snorted Koskelainen. "These days, the public thinks a corpse lies laid out pretty with closed eyes. Hollywood!"

Lundquist's general store and post office was next to the sheriff's house, and Ole Lundquist himself collared them in the street. "Hey, Bernie, my wife yust told me—"

"I know. Hope it isn't Loren got killed." Sworsky opened the door of his battered '48 Pontiac.

"The Gravesend kid? No, it ain't him. I saw him couple hours ago, driving sout'. Yust glimpsed him, kind of, going hell for leather. Say, you t'ink maybe—"

"This is no time to think." Sworsky heaved his bulk into the driver's seat.

"That's the motto of this whole damned century," said Koskelainen. He jogged around the car and got in.

Long late sunlight slanted across trees and housetops and the dusty street which was the only one Two Beavers had bothered to name. Sworsky braked at the doctor's home and Koskelainen scuttered inside. There was no one else visible, but as he waited, the sheriff heard a sudden defiant snapping of firecrackers. Some kid must have picked them up in Wisconsin and saved them for today. Hell of a note, fireworks on the Fourth of July when it hadn't rained for three weeks. If it weren't for this goddam stiff— Koskelainen came back with his equipment. Dust whirled behind the car as it nosed northward.

"A dead man in armor." The doctor struck a wooden match on

his sole and rekindled his pipe. "Appropriate, isn't it? I mean, with Clayborne such an archery enthusiast. I wouldn't be surprised if we suddenly found a moat around his lodge."

"Hell," muttered Sworsky. "Goddam ruts. When're you gonna write that letter to St. Paul? Somebody's got to goose the legislature."

"Come now, Bernie," said Koskelainen. "This case demands the wildest imagination. We must be prepared to wear cloth of gold if necessary, and encounter perilous damosels, and learn that our respected Chicago investment broker Hugh Clayborne is really the Black Prince snatched out of space and time." He grinned snag-toothed around his briar. "You don't lack a soaring fantasy, my friend; after all, you vote Republican."

"You read too many books," grunted the sheriff. "Sometimes I wonder why you stay in this hick country."

"Well, I like the fishing. And Clayborne was always fun to talk to. I'll be very sorry if it turns out that he murdered this unknown knight."

"Damn! It just now hit me. Young Gravesend barreling out of town, two hours ago."

"Hm, yes, there is that. And, of course, Clayborne broke his arm last week. I set it myself." The doctor scowled. "But Loren Gravesend—a skinny little playboy from Chicago's Gold Coast —I can't see it."

They had only about a mile to go till they reached Clayborne's summer lodge. Sworsky turned right and followed a graveled driveway, a better surface than the public road, through a well-manicured lawn.

The house was long and low, built of carefully trimmed logs and carefully undressed stone. Its main entrance faced the driveway; the rear door, opposite, opened directly on the forest, whose border marched straight north for a hundred yards to the edge of the property. There the trees ran wild again, back to meet the road. To Sworsky's left, where the woods enclosed the northeast corner of the lawn, stood a target, vividly red and blue against darkling green.

Clayborne stepped out the front door as the car pulled up. He was a tall, quiet man with thick graying hair. His clothes were fashionably but inoffensively outdoor-type. His right arm, heavily bandaged, hung in a sling.

"Hello, sheriff," he nodded. "Hello, John." There was whisky on his breath, and the face was colorless.

"Where's this dead man?" Sworsky scrambled out of the car. Evening shadows lapped his feet.

"Right this way." Clayborne started across the lawn. "I was

indoors this afternoon. Went looking for him and—Terrible." He shivered.

"D'you know who it is?"

"Oh, yes. Henry Schmitt. My partner. He came down for a visit and—" Clayborne bit his lip. "We've been partners for twenty-five years. I never thought—"

They crossed by the target. It was painted on a short fence of twelve-inch-thick pine posts. Clayborne entered the woods behind it, parting the brush with the casual soundless ease of many years. He had built the lodge a decade ago and spent most of his vacations there.

A few yards inside the forest, there was a brighter gleam among the sun-flecks.

Koskelainen stooped over the body. Metal sheathed it from head to toe, a complete set of fourteenth-century French plate armor, probably—he thought—for tilting. The helmet gaped open and the middle-aged face that stared out was assuredly dead. There was a neat round hole in the head.

"Gone," he nodded after a routine check with mirror and fingers.

"I . . . I threw back the visor," said Clayborne. "It was obvious that— Otherwise I haven't touched anything."

"Your partner, huh?" said Sworsky. "How'd it happen?"

"I don't know, I tell you. Henry was visiting me—he went outside, and after several hours I began to worry and—"

"He went for a stroll in that tin suit?"

"Yes. He was quite a medievalist, you see. His hobby . . . he must have read every historical novel ever laid in the Middle Ages, and owned some weapons and— He got this suit from a New York agency two or three weeks ago . . . that is, he ordered it, though it wasn't delivered till a few days ago—" Clayborne shrugged. "Excuse me. I'm not myself."

"Gimme a hand here." Koskelainen was tugging at the body. "Blasted armor weighs a ton," he grumbled.

Sworsky stooped and helped him roll it over. Iron rattled horribly. The same small hole was punched through the back as through the breastplate. Koskelainen felt its edges. "Yes," he said. "Bent outward. The slug went in the front and came out the back, probably tore right through the heart. It may have taken him a few minutes to die, of course. Such wounds are seldom instantly fatal."

"Well—" Sworsky stood up and scratched his head, feeling helpless. He had only encountered one murder in his life, and that was a straightforward drunken stabbing. Just what did you do, anyway? He tried to remember the stories in the de-

tective magazines. "Well, who could have killed him?"

"It must have been an accident," said Clayborne. Self-possession was returning, his straight brown face looked more thoughtful. "Henry didn't have an enemy in the world, as far as I know. Maybe some kid, shooting for fun."

"Nobody for miles around has kids that age," snapped Koskelainen. "And anyhow, if a person wants to go squirrel hunting around here, or try to bag a deer out of season, he's got his own woods to do it in."

"Well," said Sworsky. "Well, we better get him back to the house, hadn't we?"

"Be quite a job," said the doctor. "Let's get this junk off him. You know how it's put together, Hugh?"

"No. I'm an archer, not a would-be knight errant— Sorry. Hell of a thing to say." Clayborne squatted and groped at the metal with the awkwardness of a strongly right-handed man forced to use his left. Koskelainen snorted and brushed him aside.

"Let me. I can figure it out, I suppose. Helmet . . . yes, and the gorget attaches, and then the palettes—" His small brisk fingers got to work.

"I didn't know you was an expert on armor, Doc," said Sworsky.

"Well, I've amused myself with reading history, and that plus a little common sense and a few tools out of the bag— Don't bother me."

"Who else is at the lodge?" asked the sheriff.

"Just myself," mumbled Clayborne. "And Henry . . . my wife is visiting her relatives in Detroit this month, took the kids along, and Henry . . . Mr. Schmitt was a bachelor. You know I don't keep servants here."

"How about the Gravesend boy?"

"Oh . . . oh, yes. He had to leave today." Clayborne looked confused. "I saw him off about two hours ago."

"Interesting," murmured Koskelainen, peeling off a delicately fluted tuille. "Judging from the extent of blood clotting, I'd say at a guess your friend has been dead for some two hours."

Sworsky felt a primitive tingle along his back. "And the kid was driving like a bat out of hell through town, headed south, a couple hours ago," he added slowly.

"Now wait." Clayborne lifted a shaky left hand. "Loren . . . he had to leave, I tell you. He just had to leave. That's all there was to it."

Armor plate clashed at their feet. Henry Schmitt had worn padding beneath, and under that was a nylon T-shirt and shorts. They seemed grotesquely out of

place. Stripped down so far, the slain knight was a pitiful small corpse with limp belly and knobbed knees. Koskelainen examined the chest wound. Whatever killed the man had gone through with terrific velocity, to make so little and clean a hole.

"I kind of thought knights was bigger than that," said Sworsky.

"Oh, no," replied Koskelainen. "Not as a rule. Average height in the Middle Ages was well below the modern. What d'you expect, with a diet of bread and salt fish and meat on feast days?"

"But how the hell could he even walk in that outfit?"

"He could . . . slowly and clumsily. The French at Crécy, among other incredible blunders, actually dismounted and attacked on foot at one stage. It cost them the battle." Koskelainen got the last plate off and squatted for a moment, looking into the lightless eyes. Poor Henry Schmitt. An aging bachelor in a Chicago office, living out his dreams through books. He'd never even come to his partner's lodge and tried for a muskie—till now— "I suppose," remarked the doctor, swabbing off the worst of the uncleanness of death, "he was a steady customer at the Ivanhoe?"

"Why, yes." Clayborne was surprised. "How did you know?"

"Fits his character. The Ivanhoe is a first-class restaurant and a lot of fun, but you'd hardly call it an authentic medieval atmosphere—unless all you know about medieval times is taken from bare-bosomed historical novels. Well, let's get him indoors, God rest him."

Sworsky took the shoulders and Koskelainen the feet. Clayborne picked up the doctor's bag and led the way out onto the lawn. A hundred feet from the target, something else glistened. "What's that?" asked Koskelainen.

"Oh . . . over there? I don't know," said Clayborne. "Come on, let's get inside and I'll break out the whisky. I think we all need it."

Koskelainen grunted, set down his burden, and stumped across the lawn. Sworsky saw him pause and look down. Then he waved.

The sheriff joined him. There was a rifle lying on the grass, as if it had been thrown toward the woods and the thrower hadn't quite made it.

" 'Ware the fingerprints," said Koskelainen sardonically.

The other man bent over. ".220 Swift," he said. "Using hard-nosed bullets, I suppose it would punch right through a man in armor."

Clayborne approached. The lowering sun blazed a halo behind him, they could not see his face, but his tone was thin: "One

of mine. I use it for target shooting, mostly."

"You couldn't use it with a busted arm," Sworsky straightened. "So who did? Why did Gravesend take off?"

"I don't know, damn it!"

"I think you do, Mr. Clayborne. It'll be better if—"

The tall man sagged. He stared at the rifle shining on the grass.

"All right. It was an accident. He panicked and . . . I guess I did too. Loren Gravesend's father was one of my closest friends. I couldn't let his son go to jail for—"

"I thought Henry Schmitt was also a friend," said Koskelainen.

"Of course, of course. Shut up, will you? I'll give you all the facts you want, but let's get Henry into the house." Clayborne's tone was raw. He turned and walked stiff-legged back to the body.

Sworsky picked up the gun in his handkerchief. As he went to his car and laid it on the seat, an elderly Ford chugged up the drive. Sworsky's voice drifted back, heartily damning all sightseers and ending up by deputizing the newly arrived trapper to keep others off the premises. After all, he played poker with the man now and then.

Returning, he helped Koskelainen carry Schmitt inside. They stretched the body on a bed—no rigor mortis yet—and drew a sheet across it. When they reentered the living room, Clayborne was trying to unstopper a bottle of Scotch with his teeth.

"Damn arm," he said. A measure of ease had come back, and he smiled. "You do the honors, John."

Koskelainen nodded curtly, setting out glasses, ice, and soda. He had often visited here. Clayborne was one of the local rarities who could talk about something besides weather, crops, and tourists.

The room was big, with oak rafters across the ceiling, a stone fireplace, comfortable furniture. There were a few heads on the walls, deer and moose. Several guns were racked in one corner; Koskelainen noticed the empty place where the Swift had been. Nearby hung a collection of bows, from a lady's toy to a huge hundred-pound longbow. There was also a set of arrows for each; two sets for the big fellow: shafts tipped with sharp points for target practice and others with the murderous broad head of the hunter.

"All right, Mr. Clayborne." Sworsky took his drink and sat down. Clayborne remained standing, Koskelainen tamped his pipe and prowled the room. "I guess I can't blame you too much, but you'd better give me the straight story now."

"I will. I was a damned fool, of course. It's simple enough.

Loren wanted to do some shooting this afternoon, but he was still in the house listening to a ball game on the radio when Henry and I went out. He, Loren, wasn't interested in the armor. Henry wanted to try walking around in it, learn how it felt to be a knight . . . you know. Later on he was going to hire a horse and—" Clayborne smiled, a sad little smile. "Anyhow, we went out into the woods. Henry was moving very slowly, of course, and had to stop to rest every so often. We came to where . . . where you saw him, and he was standing and resting when I heard the shot. Henry pitched over—dying—he was already unconscious, I saw him die, and meanwhile poor Loren was banging away at the target, I heard him . . . So I came out and told him what had happened. He was in an absolute panic. I was pretty shaken myself. You understand. All I could think was, he ought to get away. He took his car and I went back into the house and . . . had a few drinks, I guess. I'm not very clear about it. Nightmare. Finally I called you."

"It was an accident, then?" asked Koskelainen. "Nothing criminal about that. Why should Gravesend panic?"

"He just did. You know Loren. Inherited money, night life, shy skinny boy . . . nice kid, though, in spite of everything. Nothing like that had ever happened to him before. Hell, you know how rattled *I* was."

"Uh-huh." Sworsky rubbed his chin. "Clear enough. I don't know if I even ought to have the boy picked up. We'll need him for a witness, of course, but—I don't know. What do you think, Doc?"

"Better do so," advised Koskelainen. "This business is not at all clear, in spite of what Hugh says."

"Huh?"

"That target is backed by a foot of solid pine. How could a bullet get through and kill Schmitt on the other side?"

"I think—" Clayborne nodded to himself. "Yes. My fault. But I'd forgotten about it. There's a three-inch crack in the fence. Two of the posts aren't placed quite side by side. It's so far off the target area that I never gave it a thought . . . I'm a better shot than that, with gun *or* bow, and use a straw butt for arrows anyway . . . Well, I suppose Loren's first slug flew wild, just happened to go through that crack—"

"Possibly," said Koskelainen. "And now the body has been moved, so we can never be sure just how possible it was. So much for amateur detectives." He stopped his pacing and blew tobacco clouds. "I'd like to have a look at that fence, though. You might call up meanwhile, Bernie, and

get the coroner here. And alert the state police for Gravesend."

Clayborne gave the doctor a quizzical glance. " 'So much for amateur detectives,' " he quoted.

Koskelainen grinned and went to the door. Clayborne paused to identify Gravesend's car for the sheriff and then followed.

The sun was behind the trees now, but there was enough light. Clayborne pointed out the gap in the fence, a yard from the painted target. Koskelainen squinted at it. "Looks like those two posts were pried away from each other," he said. "Marks here in the wood, a crowbar?"

"Cloud be," said Clayborne. "You remember I hired a man this spring to do the rough work of cleaning up here." The doctor's head moved squirrel-like. "What're you looking for, John?"

"Bullet holes around the crack. I don't see any. They're all in the target or its immediate vicinity. If Gravesend was that good a shot, why should he miss so badly the first time?"

"I don't know, unless . . . Wait a minute! You're not implying—"

Koskelainen's short body turned around and his voice fell bleak: "Did Gravesend stand to gain anything by Schmitt's death?"

"Why . . . well . . . well, I believe Henry left him a bequest. He, Henry, was quite fond of Loren too. But—"

"Perhaps we'll find that Gravesend has less money of his own than you realize. Didn't you mention something about Schmitt getting married, the day I came up and fixed your arm?"

Clayborne nodded. "Poor old Henry finally tumbled," he said. "Or, rather, I think he was often in love, but too shy—you know the type. He finally met the right girl, though, and they planned to be married next month. It won't be any pleasure telling her about this."

"So I imagine she'd have inherited everything from him after the marriage, when he got around to changing his will," said Koskelainen unsentimentally. "Your share of the partnership, Gravesend's bequest— It could have been done on impulse, you know. Gravesend comes out on the range, hears Schmitt clanking through the woods, jumps up on the crossbar here and looks over the fence— If he could pass it off as accidental, well, figure it out for yourself."

"I don't believe it," said Clayborne. His tone was sharp.

"Just speculating. *I* find it hard to believe that he could miss by a yard the first time and put every succeeding bullet inside the circles. It's possible, of course, but most improbable."

They started back toward the

house. A wan breeze gusted in the pines. " 'The improbable is not to be confused with the impossible,' " recited Clayborne. " 'Every imaginable concatenation of events, including those of the actual world—' "

" '—is most improbable; reality is a state of low entropy,' " finished Koskelainen. People who have read Haeml are so few that it had endeared him and Clayborne to each other.

"By the way, I never did see that gizmo that broke your arm," he added. "Still have it?"

"Yes. In the garage. Damn fool thing to do. This seems to be my time for pulling fool stunts."

"I'd be interested—and say, who wrapped all that pretty white gauze around your splint? That's not my style."

"Oh, it was beginning to look dirty," said Clayborne. "I didn't want to bother you about it, so I just wound this strip on myself."

"Hm. Better let me re-do it. Hate to have people think I'm that sloppy."

"Not just now. Here, want to see my gadget?" Clayborne opened the garage door. Besides his station wagon, there was a workbench inside, with a thing of vises and screws on top of it. "A Chicago outfit built it to my design. I had what I thought was an original idea for making my own bows. Put the ends in these clamps here, pull this lever to bend the stick. All I did was catch my own arm in it and—snap!"

"Hell of a design," grunted Koskelainen. "Better adapted to breaking ulnars than bending wood."

"I'm not much of an engineer. Found that out all right." Clayborne smiled. "I was lucky to have a clean fracture."

"Yeah. Well, I'll fix up that wrapping for you again."

"Never mind, I said. I'll come see you tomorrow or sometime. Let's go back in, it's getting chilly." Clayborne opened the door into the house.

It was gloomy within till he snapped on the lights. Sworsky was still on the phone. Clayborne and Koskelainen sat down on a couch and resumed their drinks.

"I'm going to miss Henry," said the broker. "He was such a decent little guy. And the first time I persuaded him to come up here and get some fresh air, what happens?"

Koskelainen scowled at his pipe, not liking the thought that was growing inside him.

"Do you think Loren will get in any real trouble?" went on Clayborne anxiously.

"I'm no lawyer," said the other man with a note of irritation. "At the very least, he's guilty of leaving the scene of an accident, but I don't imagine that'll cost him more than a fine. At the

worst, though, he's a murderer."

"But—damn it, John! I saw him, you know, when he learned. Ripped up inside, as if the bullet had gone through his own body. I've known him all his life, and he isn't that good an actor."

"A murder done on impulse must leave you rather excited for a while," said Koskelainen dryly.

"But—"

"Look here." The doctor's knuckles whitened where he held the bowl of his pipe. He looked straight through Clayborne and spoke in a high, rapid tone. "I have to do some pretty rough things now and then. D'you think I enjoy lancing a child's eardrum? Stuffy as it sounds, I also believe in civic duty." He clamped down hard on the stem. "If murder has been committed, and I suspect it has, I've got to do what I can to find the killer."

"The police—"

"Police be damned! One reason the Almighty State is swallowing us up today, Hugh, is that we delegate too many of our own jobs to it. Now about this killing, I have a notion that it was not an accident. I could be wrong, but I'd like to check the facts. Would you answer some questions?"

"Of course." Clayborne leaned back with an indulgent expression.

"Whatever you tell me may have to be checked."

"Sure. I'm not covering up for Loren, I see now I was an idiot to try it. If he killed Henry on purpose, I want to know too."

"Good. Now, then. When did you invite Schmitt and Gravesend to visit you here?"

"Oh . . . about the middle of last month. I suggested they drive up for the Fourth of July and spend the rest of the week."

"And then you came here yourself?"

"On the twenty-first. Wanted to get the place in order and so on. I broke my arm on the twenty-fifth, if you remember."

"I do. And you left the next day."

"Had business in New York. Interrupted my vacation for it. But what has all this to do with —Henry?"

Koskelainen sighed. "I'm trying to establish whether this was a planned or an impulsive murder—or, of course, an accident. Okay. You took a bus to Hibbing, being unable to drive, and chartered a plane to Minneapolis; at least, that's what you told me you were going to do."

"Right. Caught a New York plane there. Did my business and returned over Chi on the thirtieth. I spoke with Henry and Loren over the phone, from the airport, then flew to Duluth and caught a bus to Two Beavers. Been here since then, mostly loafing. I like to be by myself."

Koskelainen made an elaborate affair out of rekindling his pipe. "I see," he nodded when

he had it going again. "Now just what did Schmitt and Gravesend say to you over the phone?"

"Well . . . Henry said his armor had arrived on the promised date and he was going to bring it with him."

"That's what puzzles me," said the doctor. "I can see why Schmitt would want to try on his suit, but why bring it way to hellandgone up here?"

"I told you he was a romantic," said Clayborne. "He didn't favor me with the details, but can't you just see it? Walking in the greenwood y-clad a coat of mail—"

Koskelainen smiled sourly. "That *would* be the phrase he'd use, wouldn't it? He'd hardly stop to think that a coat of mail referred to chain mail . . . All right. Let's get on with it. When did he say he'd arrive, and when did he actually do so?"

"Same time in either case. Yesterday evening, just as planned."

"Now how about young Gravesend? Arrived with him?"

"Yes. They took Loren's car, and he, Loren, drove all the way. Then he went into town for a few beers. You can ask whoever saw him there whether he seemed nervous or not. He didn't to me."

"Wish I were young again," sighed Koskelainen. Then, after a moment: "No. I wouldn't want to be that helpless. But it would be nice to have my twenty-year-old physique back."

He sat for a moment, thinking. Clayborne sipped his drink. Sworsky finished his calls and walked over.

"Coroner'll be along," he said. "I got the highway patrol looking for Gravesend." He sat down and considered his watch. "Guess we have to stay here. I'd better call my wife too and tell her I'll be late."

Gravesend chuckled. "She's doubtless heard it already on the party line," he answered.

Koskelainen stood up. "I want another look at the body," he said harshly. "And you'd better fetch in that armor."

"I s'pose." Sworsky sighed his way back onto his feet. "I'll get Jim to help me. Guess he's been guarding the driveway long enough to rate a look at our clues."

The floor creaked under his tread. Staring out the window, Koskelainen saw him speak to the trapper and saw the two men enter the woods. Darkness ate them.

"You have a magnifying glass?" he asked Clayborne.

"Yes. Somewhere."

"Find it." Koskelainen went into the bedroom and closed the door behind him.

Schmitt was cold and stiffening. The doctor probed the wound from both sides. Wiping away clotted blood, he regarded

the small round holes and clicked his tongue.

Well, rest in heavenly castles, Henry Schmitt, and may King Arthur make you welcome. Koskelainen closed the eyes and weighted them with quarters. He wished he had some older coins.

The bathroom adjoined, and he went in and washed his hands and ran a pocket comb through his hair. The mirror showed him a tired face, beginning to age just a trifle.

By the time he returned to the living room, Sworsky and the trapper, Jim Thorson, had brought in the dismantled armor. It lay on the floor in a somehow pathetic heap. Clayborne was offering Thorson a drink and finding ready acceptance. The sheriff sat down and brooded at his own glass.

"Don't know why we have to wait around like this, John," he complained. "Just an accident, and my supper's getting cold. I hate warmed-over food."

"If it's any consolation to you, this was no accident," Koskelainen told him. "D'you have that magnifying glass, Hugh?"

"Here you are, Sherlock," said Clayborne, handing it to him.

Sworsky sat upright. "What the hell?" he asked.

Koskelainen hunkered on the floor and studied the breastplate. "Come have a look," he invited.

"All you Finns are crazy." The sheriff got down on his hands and knees. "What's this all about?"

"Yeh, you big Polack, do I have to write it out for you? Or can you even read? Look here. The missile went through the front, you can see where the metal was punched inward, and came out through this what-you-call-it fastened on Schmitt's back. It was moving in a devil of a hurry, too."

"Well, a .220 Swift has a muzzle velocity of—"

Koskelainen peered through the lens, nodded, and gave it to Sworsky. "I don't see any bullet traces," he said. "You'd expect some lead to be scraped off, wouldn't you?"

"Not necessarily," said Clayborne, looking down at them. "Those were hard-nosed bullets I had for that gun."

"Oh, well, never mind." Koskelainen rose, dusting shabby trousers. "Where's my pipe? —Ah, here— Whatever the microscope shows, or does not show, I know damn well that it wasn't a bullet killed Schmitt."

"What do you mean?" Sworsky stood up too, looking bewildered. Clayborne snapped expressionlessness down over his face. Thorson kept on drinking.

"There are a lot of accidental gun wounds around here, and I see nearly all of 'em," said Koskelainen. "A bullet like that, going through a man, is rather

messy. Neat little hole at the front, sure, but a ripped-out place big enough to put your fist in where it emerges."

"Say . . . say, yes." Thorson put his glass on a table. "I seen that on deer."

"I'm not so sure," said Clayborne.

"We can test it," said Koskelainen. "Not that it would ever have occurred to the local authorities to do so, but there are so many things in this case that just don't fit that I think we ought to call in a ballistics expert."

"What things don't fit?" inquired Sworsky.

Koskelainen explained the matter of the gap in the fence. "It's too improbable that Gravesend would shoot so badly that *one* time," he finished. "Add to that the peculiar wound, and I think there's only one answer. Schmitt was k i l l e d with a strangely appropriate weapon . . . a cloth-yard arrow."

There was a stillness.

"Are you crazy?" whispered Clayborne. "He was wearing *armor!*"

Koskelainen knocked out his dottle and took forth his tobacco pouch and began filling the bowl afresh. It was no way to treat a good pipe, but he needed it very badly. "You know better than that, Hugh," he said with a great gentleness. "You're an archer. You know what a hundred-pound bow can do to a deer. Or read your history. Why d'you think the English longbowmen were so effective against the chivalry of France? Because they could put a shaft right through a man in full armor! It's been tested. An oak fence post was draped with quilting and medieval armor one time, a number of years ago, and shot at. The arrow came out the other side of *that!*"

"Well . . . well, yes." Clayborne smiled, shakily. "Sorry, I wasn't thinking. You're right, of course."

Koskelainen struck a match. He peered over the pipe as he inhaled it to life. "Now accidental gunshot death is all too common," he said, "but I can't believe in a man being accidentally killed by an arrow in this day and age. It was murder."

"Wait a minute!" Almost, Sworsky yelped. "You mean the kid borrowed Mr. Clayborne's big bow there and shot Schmitt with it?"

"I do not," said Koskelainen. "I've never drawn a bow, but I have read history . . . and talked with you, Hugh. I doubt if a little fellow like Gravesend could even bend that hundred-pounder, let alone shoot it with such murderous accuracy." He dropped into a lecturing tone, aware that he was stalling off a moment which would hurt. "The medieval English law required every yeoman to own a bow and

spend a certain number of hours each week practicing. Why? Because it's a difficult weapon. You need years to become any good with it. After Crécy, the French kings tried to raise a similar corps, but never had any luck; France lacked that tradition of archery from boyhood on." He put his match carefully in an ashtray. "You know," he remarked, "that was why the long bow went out of use. It was as deadly as the crossbow, more deadly than the early muskets, and had a higher rate of fire than either. But any fool could learn in a few weeks to use a crossbow or a musket. It took too long to train a man to the gray goose feather."

"All right," said Thorson impatiently. He took another gulp of Scotch. "So who killed this guy?"

Koskelainen sighed. "An expert," he answered. "And one whom Schmitt trusted, because Schmitt was shot from the front."

Clayborne scowled. "I don't—I have a number of friends in a couple of archery clubs," he said uncertainly. "But as far as I know, none of them are anywhere near here, or have any motive."

Koskelainen wandered over to the arrow racks. "One of the target-shooting shafts was used, of course," he said. "The hunting arrows would have made a broader — and unmistakable — hole. Ah . . . yes, the point on this one looks rather blunted. It's been wiped clean, but I daresay a microscope will show blood-flecks in the feathers."

"For God's sake, will you come to the point?" growled Sworsky.

"I suppose I must." Koskelainen spoke so low that they could barely make out his words, and he stared at the floor. "Consider Henry Schmitt. A romantic medievalist, but with no background of scholarship whatsoever. *He* doubtless thought an arrow would bounce right off armor of proof. He wanted to dress up in such a tortoise shell and see what it felt like to be shot at in the brave days of old. He must have mentioned his idea to you, Hugh, when he first learned he c o u l d get his armor . . .

"It was easy enough. You arranged matters so that Loren Gravesend would be using the rifle this afternoon—the bare suggestion would do it, and if he was listening to the radio as you said, you would even know the approximate time he would come out. And meanwhile you walked with Schmitt, in the woods behind the target, where Gravesend couldn't see you . . . and after it was done, you hid the bow and arrow. When he thought he had killed the man, Gravesend went hysterical and

you had no trouble getting him to flee. The resulting hullabalaloo, foreseen by you or not, ought to have provided a nice smelly red herring and, incidentally, given you time to clean up any loose ends you might have overlooked. Such as this blunted arrow—"

Clayborne set his glass down and walked slowly toward the doctor. "Are you crazy, John?" he breathed. "You tell me how a one-armed man can use a bow."

"That was ingeniously thought out, too." Koskelainen would not meet the broker's eyes. He drew on his pipe and grimaced as if at a foul taste. "That apparatus of yours *was* designed to break an arm, a nice clean simple fracture, and I was meant for a witness to your condition. It took guts to do that.

"However—"

Clayborne looked at Sworsky. "Do you think he feels all right?" he asked.

The sheriff took a pack of cigarets from his shirt pocket. His fingers were not quite steady. "Let the little guy finish, Mr. Clayborne," he said.

"I thought you were my friend, John."

"I was," said Koskelainen. "I am. Don't interrupt me, please. I'd like to get this over with." Suddenly he glanced up and locked eyes with the tall man. "Can I have a look at your arm?"

"What?"

"If it really is immobilized, then of course I'm wrong and I'll beg your humble pardon. Let me take those wrappings off."

Clayborne looked around. "No," he said. "I don't trust you. You might be delirious and—"

Koskelainen shrugged. "No matter. Let me continue, then. It so happens there is a way in which a simply fractured limb can be made perfectly useable. It requires the facilities of a large clinic . . . such as can be found in New York. Your trip east was for that purpose. The doctor there made an incision, put a stainless steel nail in the bone, sewed up the flesh again . . . it's more complicated than that, actually, but there's the upshot of it, and your arm is now as good as it ever was. I'll be able to identify the scar of the operation, Bernie, and we can get his arm X-rayed and check the New York clinics—"

Clayborne stepped back from him. Sworsky stood with arms dangling loose, wishing he had a gun along and thinking that the reason he didn't was that it would have looked too foolish.

Koskelainen went on: "I have to reconstruct the sequence. I could be wrong here and there, but Gravesend's testimony—now that we have no preconceptions to discount it—will check me up. You stopped at Chicago on your way back here and called him

and Schmitt, confirming that they would arrive as planned. Either then, or privately when they did come, you explained to Schmitt about your arm and told him you'd take him out as he wanted and shoot an arrow at him. But on pretense of arranging a surprise or a practical joke or something, he was not to tell Gravesend about your operation.

"Your deliberately bungled attempt to cover up for Gravesend was, of course, only intended to make things look worse for him. But it didn't really matter whether he was found guilty of murder or only of accidental killing. It didn't even matter if investigation showed an arrow had done the job, though you considered that improbable. In every case, you, with your broken arm, would be assumed innocent.

"You resplinted it yourself before calling us, and figured to wear your sling the usual length of time. If you made a short visit elsewhere in the next few days, then, when I saw the scar, you could explain it to me as another accident treated by some other doctor. And you would get Schmitt's share of a prosperous business."

His pipe had gone out again, but he didn't bother to light it. He took it from his mouth instead, and turned it over and over in his hands.

"I'm sorry, Hugh," he mumbled.

Clayborne wet his lips. "Sheriff—" he began.

"Better let the doc have a look at your arm, if you're innocent," said Sworsky. "You know, Mr. Clayborne, you are the only one around here who could use that bow."

Clayborne backed away. Sworsky and Thorson moved in on either side of him.

They were both big men, very big men.

Koskelainen sat down by the window and looked out at the fading day.

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dog spirit

by . . . Allan Beekman

When the dog spirit marked you for death, it was a particularly unpleasant death. And the dog spirit had marked Brod Brian . . .

AS BROD BRIAN came out from the temple he knew the old priest's glowering gaze followed him. He saw it reflected in the studied calm of the black-robed acolyte who waited on the porch that ran the length of the temple.

Brian knelt to put on his shoes. When he rose the acolyte's austere features wore a faint smile. Brian knew the priest was no longer watching them.

The acolyte bowed. "I am Hata. In discussions of the dog spirit, I regret, the Master is sometimes abrupt."

Brian returned the bow. "The gravity of my position led me into being untactful." His Japanese was no whit inferior to Hata's. "The Master told me the dog spirit has marked me for death." He turned. His big hands gripped the rail of the porch. "I have received a threat." His blue eyes looked down, down into the abyss of green that is Honolulu's Manoa Valley. He pointed. "A week ago I saw the mutilated body of Iwao Seki-

They'd never heard of the dog spirit in Tokyo. It was a superstition the immigrants from Hiroshima had brought to Hawaii with them, to the sunny green fields and the swaying palms whose beauty contrasted so with the dark menace of the dog spirit. . . . Allan Beekman, writing from Honolulu, describes how a bitter man used the strange cult for his own sinister ends.

yama down there. Until then I should have regarded the dog spirit an ignorant superstition."

Hata's sturdy shoulders shrugged. "The police do not realize that at this temple we heal the victims of the dog spirit. They have come to inquire about Iwao Sekiyama. But you are not a policeman, Mr. Brian. I wonder how you became involved in the case."

"I'm a friend of Mrs. Sekiyama," Brian said. From the corner of his eye he saw a red flush creep over Hata's face. But he was too preoccupied with his problem to consciously mark this evidence of emotion. "I'm a friend of Mrs. Sekiyama—and of her family."

It had begun in Tokyo's Kodokan, where he had been studying jiu jitsu. Here he had met Mrs. Sekiyama's brother and, through him, the family. Iwao Sekiyama, though an American citizen and American soldier when he met his future wife, had spent most of his childhood in Hiroshima prefecture of Japan. But Mr. Sekiyama had chosen to take his bride to Hawaii. From Hawaii had come letters—at first gay—then matter-of-fact, then grave, then invested with gloom and embroidered with horror.

When Brian decided to return to America, through Honolulu, the brother of Mrs. Sekiyama had entrusted him with a mission. Mrs. Sekiyama seemed involved in a delicate and ominous situation. Would Mr. Brian look into the matter and give what counsel and assistance he could?

When Brian arrived in Honolulu, Mrs. Sekiyama was waiting, outside the guard rail, at the airport. He looked at her slender, trim figure clad in western dress. He thought she had never looked more lovely. But as she bent forward to put a lei of fragrant gardenias about his neck, in the Hawaiian custom, and her fine features drew close to his face, he noticed her pallor and circles of darkness under the eyes he had remembered as luminous and untroubled.

In the taxi, going into town, she fought to keep back tears. Her sleek head bent, to conceal her face from him, she told the story.

"I know you'll think it silly. I thought so, too, at first. We never heard of the dog spirit in Tokyo. It's a superstition they have in Hiroshima and some other places. The immigrants from Hiroshima brought it to Hawaii with them. When I came here the woman who lived in the next house was running around on her hands and knees and barking and whining like a dog. I simply thought she was a mental case. My husband thought otherwise. He said she

was possessed by the dog spirit."

Brian looked out the window of the taxi at the beauty of the sunny green fields and the swaying palms that contrasted so with the ugliness of the story he was hearing.

Mrs. Sekiyama continued. "That night a priest came to visit the patient. He flogged her with a cat-o-nine tails. We could hear the blows falling and the woman screaming. With each stroke of the whip he would call upon the dog spirit to leave her. She screamed and screamed." Mrs. Sekiyama buried her face in her slender white hands. Her shoulders shook. "It was horrible."

"Did the spirit leave her?"

She shook her head. "No. She became worse and worse. My husband tried to explain it to me. He was usually so rational. But when it came to the dog spirit he babbled like a madman. He said there were dog spirit owners. In Hiroshima everybody knew who they were. People shunned them. The power was hereditary and went on in a family generation after generation. So marriage into such a family was unthinkable. When a dog spirit owner hated someone he would cause the dog spirit to possess the hated one. The afflicted person would sicken and die. He said, 'Someone near us must be a dog spirit owner. We don't know who it is.' "

"He was worried about himself?"

She nodded. "My husband is the most gentle and kindly man in the world. I told him no one would hate him so he didn't need to worry. He told me he had a feeling that something was wrong. He said it wasn't only when the dog spirit owner hated someone that the curse began to work. He said if a person had something the dog spirit owner wanted the dog spirit would possess that person. Then I laughed. I told him, 'What do you have that anyone might want. Look at you—a poor carpenter—with nothing in the world but a wife who loves you.' " She wiped her eyes with a lace handkerchief and sat up. "He didn't think it was funny. I don't any more."

At Waikiki Brian rented a studio cottage. That night he called on the Sekiyamas.

Mr. Sekiyama was sitting on the porch of the little frame house in which he lived. He had changed so much that Brian would not have recognized him had he seen him elsewhere, nor did he show any sign of recognizing Brian. Mr. Sekiyama lounged in a wicker chair; his hollow eyes regarded his visitor, but there was neither recognition nor interest in his expression. His face was that of a dead man.

Brian strode to the chair and gripped the hand that dangled there. There was no responding pressure. The hand, lifeless and inert, dropped back to its former resting place when Brian released it.

Mrs. Sekiyama was kneeling on a straw mat. She looked fearfully into the dusk that was gathering over the park the cottage faced. "It's this time of the night when he's at his worst. Things occur in the park to start him going."

The breeze began to stir the fronds of the palms. Straight up above the trees on the other side of the park the gibbous moon rose white and splendid. Sekiyama's gaze turned to the moon. An expression of returning interest crept into his features. From the shadows a dog barked and he sat bolt upright.

Mrs. Sekiyama drew near to Brian. "It's often the dogs, roaming the park at night, that seem to start it."

A low whine escaped Sekiyama's lips. Froth formed around his mouth and trickled down his unshaven chin. The dogs in the park began to quarrel. Their excited yelping was clearly audible across the sleeping park. Sekiyama's whining grew more excited. A bark escaped him.

Sekiyama stood up. He barked. He fell to his knees. Barking excitedly he crawled about on all fours. Brian watched in horror until the man, moaning and slobbering, the strength drained from his emaciated frame fell at Brian's feet.

They put Sekiyama to bed. Then they sat, talking, on the porch.

It appeared that Sekiyama was usually exhausted and quiet after an attack. But the attacks were coming with greater and greater frequency. Hardly a day passed now that the victim was not seized by one.

"I remember the first real attack," Mrs. Sekiyama said. "It came when Mr. Sogi was with us. Mr. Sogi had always been kind to us. We were having a sukiyaki dinner one night to which we had invited him—though we didn't know him nearly as well then as we were to know him later. I think some cleaning fluid had been spilled on the straw mat on which I was kneeling while tending the sukiyaki. Instantly it flamed up. Mr. Sogi pushed me backward with one hand. With the other hand he tore up the burning straw mat and rushed out the door with it. His hand was badly burned. It was necessary to have skin grafted on it. We tried to show our gratitude. Finally he became almost like one of the family."

"Where is he now?"

"Recently he went to the mainland. But before he went the sickness had begun to pos-

sess my husband. One night, when Mr. Sogi was here we began to talk about the family crest on the sleeve of his kimono. It was an unusual one, a *futatsu tomoe*. It always made me think of two tadpoles, head to tail, forming a circle. This night my husband was feeling unwell. He just sat there staring gloomily at the crest on Mr. Sogi's sleeve.

"Finally Mr. Sogi smiled and said, "Tell me, Mr. Sekiyama, what do you find on my sleeve to fascinate you?' My husband said, 'It's your family crest. I've never seen one just like it. It makes me think of two dogs chasing each other in a circle.'

"And no sooner had my husband said this than he fell on all fours and began barking like a dog."

"Did Mr. Sogi believe in the dog spirit?"

She shook her head. "He is a highly educated man. He said he regarded it as no more than a superstition—mass hysteria or something of the sort. But when medical treatment didn't seem to help my husband, Mr. Sogi admitted that priests sometimes seem to have success in exercising the dog spirit. He mentioned the Rev. Tanaka in Manoa. My husband talked of going there. But then Mr. Sogi went to the mainland. So no more has been done."

Two mornings later, Iwao Sekiyama, naked and dead, was found in Manoa Valley. Brian, who had reported Sekiyama's absence to the police, went with them when a report of a body being found came in.

All that was mortal of Iwao Sekiyama lay in the deep grass, trampled down as if from a struggle, his thin body marked with bruises and gashes that might have been inflicted by the fangs of a wild beast.

The huge Hawaiian, who had discovered the body, stood beside it. He had told a weird story of wild dogs roaming the valley the preceding night and disturbing his sleep with their yelping.

The detective captain nodded. "Plenty of wild dogs here. When the troops pulled out after the war they left their pets. The dogs reverted to a wild state. They roam the valley, savage as wolves. Had a case of a boy who picked up a wild pup. The bitch almost killed him. Would have killed him if help hadn't been right there. But no dogs have been near this guy. That's plain." He was bent over the body as he was speaking.

The Hawaiian's eyes rolled in their sockets. "The wild dogs howled last night. My missus say, 'Hear them dogs, Kioki! Hear them dogs! They have a victim. They pullin' that victim to pieces, Kioki.' "

The detective captain shook his head in disgust. "That's foolish talk. Did you ever hear of a dog able to write? Whoever killed this guy wrote on this guy's forehead in blood. Look at these characters. They look like Japanese." He looked up at Brian. "Look here, Brian, you say you were educated in the Orient. What does this here writing say? This character right here."

Brian looked. "There are two characters."

The detective captain looked worried. "All right. There are two characters. What do they say?"

Brian peered at the ideographs, written in blood on the dead man's forehead. "The first character says 'dog.' "

The blood ebbed from the Hawaiian's brown face, leaving it a sickly muddy color. "Dog!"

Brian leaned closer to the dead man. "The second character says 'spirit.' 'Dog spirit.' "

Now, standing on the porch of the temple, Brian's thoughts came back to Hata. "It is no wonder, Mr. Hata, that the police have visited you. Mr. Sekiyama talked of visiting you. His body was found down there in the valley."

Hata shook his head. He stood, in a curiously unJapanese attitude, his hands folded on his abdomen—the left hand covering the right. "We know nothing of Mr. Sekiyama. Had he come here we should have tried to help him."

Brian bit his lip. "I want to know all I can about the dog spirit."

"You mentioned that you were threatened."

Brian nodded. "Last night the dogs were fighting outside my window. This morning the dog spirit characters were written on the window sill. Underneath, in Japanese, was written, 'The dog spirit demands its victim.' Apparently I am to be next."

Hata's almond eyes narrowed. "You have reason to be disturbed. I regret that the Master, who is so accomplished, refused to help you."

Brian studied the other. He had not regarded the Rev. Tanaka as accomplished. He had put him down as an ignorant fanatic, presumably without any real church authority. He wondered what a man as worldly and intelligent as Hata seemed to be might be doing in such a service. But he did not voice his impression.

Brian said, "I simply asked if I might be permitted to attend the services for the exorcising of the dog spirit. He denounced me. He said I was educated without wisdom. He said I came to scoff, not to learn. He said I was accursed of the dog spirit and doomed to die—that my

pride prevented him from helping."

Hata screwed his face into a thoughtful frown. "The Master is somewhat narrow. I try not to be narrow. I don't think you come to scoff. You fear the dog spirit. What reason have you to scoff? But, perhaps, the Master thinks a stranger, like you, a white American—despite your Japanese speech—might inhibit the worshipper's conduct and, thus, make their cure more difficult. If the worshippers don't know of your presence—if you witness the services a little apart from the others, in a secret place of which I know, I believe he will have no reason to object. If you will not betray my confidence I will arrange to have you witness tonight's services."

Brian bowed. "Please render me this service."

They walked together to the road, below the temple, where Brian had left his rented car. Here Hata stopped and bowed.

"Farewell, Mr. Brian. Respect my confidence. Please tell no one you are coming."

Brian bowed. He turned and entered the car.

As Brian turned the key in the ignition, Hata came to the window of the car. He peered in, his face bland, his hands on the window sill. His hands, strong, short-fingered moved nervously. Brian noticed the left hand, broad and hairy, come to cover the scarred right hand, in the peculiar gesture he had noted before.

"Tell no one you are coming, Mr. Brian."

"Until tonight," Brian answered. As he drove away the suave, cultivated voice of Hata ran through his mind like a murmuring brook. He remembered the odd, animal grace of the man's hands as they moved across the window sill of the car—the left hand crossing over and falling on the scarred right hand. Somehow the memory troubled him. He could not drive it from his mind.

Brian stood in the darkness of a little alcove that overlooked the temple room thronged with the Rev. Tanaka's followers. He saw, before them, the priest, himself, in a brilliant orange robe, rosary in hand, intoning the Buddhist Sutras.

The devotees, seemingly of the lowest strata of Japanese society, knelt on the straw-matted floor reading or reciting the Sutras—all oblivious of Blake's presence. The rhythmical intonation of the Sutras, the regular boom of a wooden gong seemed to heighten the near frenzy of the worshippers and induce a state of ecstasy. They looked toward the priest and frenzied moanings began to escape them.

Brian saw a hag go to the altar, light a bunch of incense

and put the burning mass into her toothless mouth. Her body twitched, her eyes rolled.

She screamed, "Kobo Daishi said to wash the sins from my mouth."

The priest turned and touched her body with his rosary. He did not pause in his intonations.

Brian saw a stout woman charge forward, push the priest's rosary away and throw the hag to the floor.

The stout woman pointed at the grovelling hag. "Back, back, sinner! How dare you approach Kobo Daishi!" And seizing the hag's coarse, grizzled hair she dragged her away from the altar.

Then the stout woman, dishevelled from her exertions, straightened. She levelled a finger at the congregation, then pointed to herself. "Kobo Daishi is with me!"

She began to prance up and down before the altar, sometimes coming within a yard of Brian.

She emitted a moan. The moan was caught up by the congregation. A whining, as of eager dogs, arose.

A woman, near Brian, fell to the floor. A couple lifted her limp figure to a sitting position. The afflicted woman whined, then barked.

A man placed a bunch of burning incense under her nose. "Confess!" the man cried, as if addressing the spirit who possessed her, "Who are you?"

The woman broke away and ran, on all fours, toward Brian's hiding place. Hata saw this and headed her off. Just before she reached the alcove he stopped her. He bent in his black robe to assist her to rise. Brian noticed the crest on his sleeve.

It was an unusual crest. It was a *futatsu tomoe*. It looked like two tadpoles, head to tail, forming a circle. To an ecstatic devotee of the cult it might also appear like two dogs chasing each other in a circle.

Brian drew back with a shudder. And as he did so the solution he had been groping for, since he had seen Hata's scarred left hand clutching the window sill of his car, came to him.

Brian drew back the panel leading to the porch and stepped out. Black clouds blotted out moon and stars. But in the valley, far below, lights twinkled. A figure stepped from the temple entrance and stole toward the alcove where, a moment before, Brian had been concealed. Brian withdrew into the deepest shadows.

When the figure had passed him Brian stepped out, directly behind the other. "Are you on your way to commit another murder, Mr. Sogi?"

Hata whirled. At that moment the moon, like a luminous silver coin, peeped out from the rent

clouds and lit up the scene like day.

Hata shook his head. He laughed. His cultivated voice was as pleasant and calm as ever. "You joke, Mr. Brian. What murder have I committed?"

"The murder of Iwao Sekiyama."

Hata drew closer. "Indeed! Then, knowing that, why did you come here?"

Brian shrugged. "I didn't know it till a moment ago. I suspected some connection between Mrs. Sekiyama's admirer, Mr. Sogi, and the murder. What connection I didn't know. I saw your scarred right hand on the window sill of my car today. It tends to identify you—though you gained it in a noble act. Tonight I saw your family crest. I remembered it was the same I had been told was used by Mr. Sogi. Now I know you and Mr. Sogi are the same person."

Hata's voice was one of gentle rebuke. "But even so, Mr. Brian? Even if I and Mr. Sogi are the same man, is that justification for accusing me of murder? I had no reason for hating Iwao Sekiyama."

"Dog spirit owners also act against those who have something they want."

Hata shrugged and smiled. "The police say Mr. Sekiyama was a poor man. Come, come, Mr. Brian! What did that poor man have that I might want?"

"A beautiful and lovely wife."

Brian heard the hiss of Hata's quick drawn breath. Hata's lips drew back in the snarl of an angry dog. "His wife then! Very well, his wife! I love his wife! I desire his wife! I burn with passion for his wife."

"You could not wait for the dog spirit to kill him?"

Hata shook his head. "I could have waited. Oh, how patiently I should have waited had you not come. The dog spirit is deadly. And in all the generations of my family none has possessed the power as potently as I. But the dog spirit works slowly. Sometimes there is a cure. I could not risk that. So when I learned you were meddling I waited no longer. I hastened his end with violence."

"And you will pay the penalty."

A maniacal chuckle came from between Hata's bared fangs. "There is no penalty. Must I who have killed so many be punished for the one murder that I have most desired? No. Only you stand between us. When you die I will possess her. She shall love me—not knowing I am a dog spirit owner—not knowing I destroyed her husband." He moved closer. The moonlight glittered on an uplifted dagger. "So now you must die. You must die before your suspicions can be told. You must die at the foot of this cliff.

You must die below the temple of the fool Tanaka who thinks I assist him—not knowing his followers are *my* victims."

Brian beckoned. "Come."

Hata advanced a step, his dagger upraised. "Ah, eager to die? Too terrified to live? Good. But for you, Mr. Brian, I have reserved a special refinement. I will carve you artfully. When your naked body is found tomorrow it will seem half-eaten by what the police like to call wild dogs."

"Come," Brian said.

A hungry whine escaped Hata. He snarled. Then, yelping like a savage dog that has run its prey to earth, he sprang at Brian.

Brian felt the hard-muscled body strike his own. He felt a burning sensation in his arm as he whirled, knelt, and threw Hata to the porch. He sprang after the prostrate figure, but Hata, catlike, was on his feet again and springing for Brian's legs. Brian sidestepped; with the full force of the side of his hand he struck Hata a chopping blow as the latter hurtled past.

Hata staggered to his feet and backed warily toward the end of the porch. Brian closed in. Hata roared and sprang. Again there was the rending of flesh and a feeling of a red hot iron piercing Brian's shoulder.

Brian struck out.

Hata staggered back, back, back to the edge of the porch. His head, his shoulders slid over the rail. He poised above the abyss. Brian closed in. Hata slid over the rail.

There was the tearing sound of a body falling through the brush. Then silence and darkness covered the void.

The glare of an electric torch half blinded him. He sank to the porch and examined his aching arm.

"Turn it off, Kamamoto," Brian said. "I don't need it."

The torch was extinguished. The strapping six-foot Kamamoto came to Brian's side, his police badge glinting in the moonlight. Brian felt the warm blood trickling down his arm.

"Switch the light on my arm," Brian said.

Kamamoto flicked the light on. He clucked his tongue in horror. "Your arm looks like it's been chewed by a mastiff."

"It feels that way, too."

Kamamoto bound up the wound with a pocket handkerchief. "Reminds me of my battle experience in the Italian campaign. When you called me at the police station today you should have warned me what was up. What made you suspect Hata?"

"I don't know. Actually I was just playing safe in asking

(*Please turn to page* 122)

prelude

by . . . Will Oursler

It might be wiser to allow your husband those dreams . . .

IT STARTED one evening, several nights after their arrival at the cottage. It was sunset time and Mrs. Smedley was on the porch, sitting quietly, watching the sunset colors and fanning herself a little with the straw fan although it was actually almost cool enough for a coat.

Bert Smedley sat on the porch rail even though he knew it worried Emily when he did that. He glanced over at her. Her profile was still rather nice, he thought, silhouetted in the shadow against the sun.

You didn't see the deepening lines of her face that way, or the dusty brown hair, more greyish this year than before. Bert was aware that a wave of pity went through him, pity for his wife, and why should a man feel sorry for his own wife when there was nothing wrong with her?

He sat there puffing on a stopped-up unlit pipe and thinking about the routine of their world, his and Emily's, the routine even of this vacation which had followed the same pattern of all the other years.

It was always August that they took the cottage. It was always August second that he closed up

You didn't see the deepening lines of her face, but Bert was aware that a wave of pity went through him, pity for his wife, and later pity for himself.

the real estate and insurance office. And August third that they drove down.

That was the unvarying date because the Marvins—Ed Marvin was married to Grace, Mrs. Smedley's sister—always took the cottage through July and left on August second because the trout season started upstate on August fourth.

There had been little deviation this time. The Smedley's—Bart and Emily—had climbed into the car, she prim and unsmiling but not displeased with anything much, and he behind the wheel, a thin, unpretentious, sallow man, but with a slight rakishness in the twist of his hat and a half-seen glitter in his grey eyes.

The drive down had taken a little longer than normal. "Four hours and eighteen minutes," Bert told Lennie, the handyman who looked after the place and who was standing on the porch waiting as the car drove up. "Got held up by those seven bad miles outside of Staunton."

Lennie had nodded. He rubbed his hand against his overalls and extended it in greeting. Then he turned to Mrs. Smedley, grinning, and began telling her how the vegetables were doing in the little patch out back beyond the incinerator.

"Plenty of sun, we've been having plenty, Mrs. Smedley. Squash is up already and going strong. Tomatoes too. Corn—well, we have to wait and see."

Mrs. Smedley had followed Bert and Lennie into the house and at once began a checkup on what Grace and Ed Marvin left behind and how much dust there was in the closets and the general state of things in the nice little kitchen.

For Emily it was the beginning again of a recurrent pattern she had learned to look forward to, a pattern of a thousand summer things, from the bright sunlight as she fixed their breakfast in the morning to the endless friendly noises of crickets and bullfrogs at night.

But for Bert her husband it was the start of something beyond her ken, something about which even he had not the least premonition in that sunset hour.

He got up from the porch rail where he had been perched and sauntered down the steps and along the gravel path to the back of the house, past the incinerator to the patch where Lennie had the vegetables.

The air was cool and warm at once, balmy almost, but with gusts of breeze which sent a shivery tingling through his body.

The sky was already growing dark in the east but the west was still streaked with the after-sunset glow of scarlets and purples and bands of grey broken by patches of pale green and blues.

Some of the softness of the light gleamed on the vegetable garden, on the neat rows of plants, on the spinach and carrots and tomatoes, on the young squashes just now maturing, as Lennie would say.

The squash at the very end of the line caught a glint of reflected gold from the sky, and for an instant, lying against the green of the plant leaves and the rich brown loam of the earth, it seemed to him like some kind of jewel, glittering, vibrant with life.

By chance, the orange-gold reflection struck this squash and no other. Bert took a step toward it, his features clouded as he experienced a mixture of emotions, finding himself drawn toward something quite against his will or even his common sense.

But looking down at this young, curving squash, he had an unexpected reaction, beyond intellect or sense—the realization that here was something unusual, something he could not express fully, something in the shape itself, the roundness, the color.

After a moment, his hand reached out to touch the softness of it and then drew back, automatically and compulsively, in a startled motion, as though he had violated the bounds of simple respectability.

The twilight sky deepened into the darkness of night itself. Up the little hill, on the porch, Emily was calling, a hint of alarm in her voice, "Bert, Bert!" He murmured in half-thinking reply and started up the hill. "Bert! Bert!" Each time it was louder than before.

As he came up the path he saw her standing at the top of the porch steps, and her momentary panic at once was transmuted into hostility. "Where have you been?" she asked angrily. "Why do you frighten me like that? I've been calling and calling."

Bert said, "I'm sorry. I've just been out there, out back."

He was going to add that he had been in the vegetable garden but some inner voice warned him that the less Emily knew about the experience, the happier.

Several times in the next two days, Bert returned to the vegetable patch on various pretexts in his own mind, slipping off while Emily was on the porch and he could saunter out back unseen.

He did not understand why, at odd moments, he found himself thinking about this particular golden squash in the garden, a yellowish curving thing, an inanimate object, thinking about it and accepting as natural the feeling that he actually was wanted by this object, or worse—wanted to be wanted.

One night about a week later, lying in the big double bed, with

Emily sonorously asleep at his side, Bert tried to face the facts. The thing obsessed him and he could not drive it away. It was always there in his thoughts, this thing that lay against the earth. *She*. He thought of it as she.

The days that followed through the rest of a rather pleasant, not-too-humid August were wholly normal and usual on the surface, and wholly unreal in this way no one else suspected.

He did not deny the fact of what had happened. He accepted it, welcomed it and nourished the situation, the whole business no one knew or would ever know. It became a secret ritual, slipping away from the house, while Emily was busy, for his rendezvous.

Once or twice, sprawled on the earth beside the vegetable garden, looking up at the sunset sky, he found himself talking out loud, foolishness, ideas long buried, poetic ideas Emily would never have listened to. Or understood.

"I like talking out here," he said once. "I like lying here and looking up at the sky and knowing you are there. Knowing that you—"

He broke off as he became aware of the *you* that had passed his lips so unthinkingly. It would appear almost that he had stepped across the invisible line between the real and the unreal.

Yet it was not hallucination, not psychosis, not the involutional building of pretenses that never happened, not the perils of the nameless, malevolent "they" against whom the moonstruck stand guard.

None of these. It was real only within himself. Only because he willed it to be real, only because it could never matter to anyone on earth except himself whether it was or not.

Emily did not guess and if she had she never could have believed it or understood it. She did notice, he supposed, how he would slip off to himself, perhaps once or twice a day.

But if so she did not mention it. She busied herself about the house, writing cards and letters to relatives and cousins and their handful of friends, all of whom rated at least a card about the cool weather and how it must be sweltering back in the city.

As August drew to its close, the thought of leaving worried him; he was not sure how it would be resolved, this thing. Even this late he had not dared to face the reality of approaching departure, despite the packing up, the putting away.

He came into supper that evening thinking about it. He hardly even noticed Emily, sitting there erect at the other end of the table.

But now she was talking and her words startled him into acute

attention. "Bert," she was saying quietly, "don't think I have been blind to the way you've been slipping off, these past few weeks."

She paused. She was smiling like a school-girl with a secret. "Bert—I have a confession. I spied on you," she gushed. "I saw you all the time gazing like a love-sick child at that squash, that beautiful little one in the corner. So I decided to save it—that particular squash. Save it for tonight. Our last night of vacation."

He looked down at the plate she handed him. For a moment he did not answer. Then he stood up and turned away.

Emily did not understand. She had a hurt frown. "Bert—what is the matter?" her high shrill voice was demanding. "After I went to all the trouble, aren't you going to eat your squash?"

DOG SPIRIT

(*Continued from page* 117)

you to drop around and check on me. I thought I might need help. Hata didn't know I'm a jiu jitsu expert. But even as an expert I had my hands full. When he realized he couldn't kill me he let himself fall over the cliff."

Kamamoto leaned over the rail. He sent a beam of light into the blackness below.

"He'll never bother anybody again. No one could live after a fall like that. It's just as well. His guilt can be established when the body is found. If he had lived to stand trial this dog spirit stuff would get in the papers. Speaking as an American of Japanese ancestry I don't want that. It simply inflames the superstitions of the ignorant. There's really nothing to such stuff. We younger ones want to ridicule these ideas. We want to wean these old people away from these foul superstitions."

From inside the temple came an agonized howling, as if from the throats of a pack of dogs stricken with grief at the death of a beloved master. Brian nursed his lacerated arm. He did not reply.

There seemed nothing to say. Nothing. . . .

good night, mr. holmes

by . . . William Vance

The murdered man wore a patch over one eye. But the marshal's vision was as keen as a swooping hawk's — and twice as relentless.

IT TAKES all kinds of people to make a world and sooner or later, it seems like, they all land in Moab. Take Ike Furley. He came in between two days and somehow or other got on with Sam Rucker, a dried-up old Welsh miner who wore a black eye patch and had a mighty fine claim.

Sam was an old coal miner who took down with chest sickness and came out here where the mountain air is calculated to do a body some good. He got right well, both physical and financial. He cured his chest and staked a claim and was taking out enough ore to pay off the old homestead. Leastwise, the Atomic Energy Commission inspector claimed it was richer than most. But Sam being an old coal miner, just couldn't abide throwing rock in his ore to add weight.

He was always picking up some of the footloose ones camped along the red Colorado with a string of snot-nosed young 'uns with their shirt tails flapping out. He'd give them a few days work

It's flattering to be compared to Sherlock Holmes—even if you happen to be a marshal on the red Colorado, with a proud heritage of rash encounters stretching back to the West of Billy the Kid to keep you constantly vigilant. And since flattery is always pleasant, we're confident you'll identify yourself with just such a sagacious law officer—in this brand new, dark canyon murder thriller by one of the accomplished mystery writers on the gunsmoke trail.

and send them along. I don't know how Ike wrangled it. He come all alone, like a hungry coyote and I seen him standing back, watching Sam pack the jeep for the haul to Six Mile. I seen him now and again that Spring and he always reminded me of a coyote.

I remember it was a raw day, late in spring—not overcast but a bite to the wind. I'd just attended the town council and listened to Ezra Rock apply for a permit to put up a trailer court. He was going to clear out his pear orchard, by godfrey, and that was just something else to make me blink. I'd got pears out of that orchard when I was going to the two-room school in Moab, back when they wasn't no main road through here at all. I was feeling low about it, to tell the truth, and I was standing outside the town hall sucking my teeth, and watching the sun go down quick, like it does out here, when a car swung over the hogback out of Six Mile and come barreling down the canyon, hell for breakfast. The headlights shot a long beam downward—a beam that swung like a drunk, to the bounce of the car.

I caught myself waggin' my head. That fool Ike Furley, I thought, kind of cross, and then I strolled on down toward the jail, thinking that everybody in the whole durn country was always in a hurry these days. I kind of wished our town was like it was when I was first elected Town Marshal. Quiet and peaceful, then. And Ezra Rock had no mind to cut down good fruit trees to make a durn fool trailer court. I reached the jail when the jeep skidded to a stop and Ike Furley hopped out.

"Marshal? That you, marshal?" He sounded kind of excited.

I sucked my teeth some more. "Yup, what's up?" I asked.

He come a step closer. "I—I hate to tell you this, Marshal. I had to shoot Sam—in self defense!" He let out his breath and his shoulders slumped.

Well, first off, I had a notion to call him a liar right then and there. But there wasn't a more peaceful man living or dead than Sam Rucker and on second thought, I figured I better not go flinging out accusations until I got the whole story.

"Come in here," I said. "Let's have the story, Furley."

As luck would have it Harve Bennion come by right then. He runs the Moab Clarion and has been after my scalp since we got uranium. Thinks since we tripled our population we need some Dick Tracy kind of law. He's a pint-sized little gent without much hair, with a yen to get his paper quoted by TIME and the like, and he is always trying to get my goat.

"What's that?" he asked, his

nose-for-news voice taking over, which is an octave higher than a coyote in mating time.

"Old big ears," I said, but not out loud. "Come on in, Harve. Might as well hear it, too."

We went in and I flicked on the light switch and went around and sat at my desk and pushed my hat on back my head. Furley stood in front of my desk. He was bareheaded and his stringy brown hair kept falling in his eyes and he kept wiping it back with a dirty hand. He hadn't shaved for a couple of days and his whiskers would have made a Geiger counter sound like a screech owl. He said, "I hated to do it. Was him or me, though."

"You or him?" squeaked Harve. "What's it all about?"

"He claims he shot Sam Rucker in self defense," I said. I glanced at Harve as he hastily dug out a notebook and stretched his neck, for all the world like a hound dog smelling rabbit tracks. "Go on, Furley. Tell me about it."

"He'd been actin' funny for a couple of days," Furley said, his Adam's apple working like sixty. "This mornin' he told me to work inside. He'd handle—"

"Wait a minute," I said. "What you mean, actin' funny?"

"Well, cussin' me out and tellin' me to cook my own meals. Things like that there."

Well, I knew Sam was chief cook and bottle washer up there on the claim, in Six Mile. He sort of liked to cook and keep house and he confided to me once that he didn't want Ike Furley handling the food he ate. I didn't blame him, either. But cussin'—that's something else. I know Sam was a sort of fill-in for the Baptist preacher back when he mined coal. He was a regular ordained preacher and I never heard him say a swear word since I knew him. I let that go, though, and said, "Go on, Furley."

Furley looked at me for a minute and cleared his throat. "He kept me on the dump, usually. He worked inside. Liked it. But this mornin' he told me to take the loadin' chore. So I did. I loaded twice as much as he did and this afternoon late, when I rode the trip out, he was standing off to one side and let go at me with his rifle. I up and shot him—just when he was ready to shoot again."

He cleared his throat again and looked at me and then let his gaze wander to Harve Bennion and on to the window.

Shifty-eyed whelp, I thought. It just don't ring true nohow. "Anybody see it?" I asked.

He shook his head. "Wasn't a soul around." He reached in his hip pocket and came out with a .38 Smith and Wesson and laid it on the desk. "Here's my gun.

Just one shell fired. Sam's lyin' up there just where he fell, still holdin' his rifle—and you'll see it's been fired, too."

I broke the gun and looked at it. There were five shells in it and one had been fired. He carried it empty under the hammer. "Pretty handy with a gun," I said. "How come you carryin' it while you workin'?"

"You know dang well all us people on good claims been carryin' guns," Furley said, a hard note in his voice. "Sam told me to carry it, in the first place."

I had a hunch he was lying again, there. Sam was always a peaceable man. I believe he'd get up and leave his claim before he'd fight about it, much as it meant to him. But I had no way of proving anything. I sighed. "Well, guess we'll have an inquest in the morning— Hey, where you goin'?" I yelled at Harve Bennion.

He stopped at the door. "Going? I'm gonna file this with the Associated Press in Salt Lake! You know I'm a stringer for them, don't you?"

I moved my shoulders. "Tell Doc Watterson about it, will you—on your way, of course."

"Tell him yourself," he said. "I'm getting on a phone pronto." He slammed the door shut.

I looked at Ike Furley and surprised a look of satisfaction in his eyes. He lost it in a hurry. I heaved myself up. "Might as well stay in town tonight," I said "We'll go out in the mornin' for the inquest. You can sleep here in jail if you want."

He cleared his throat. "Uh, guess I'll find a hotel room."

I shook my head. "All filled up. You ought to know that. Come on back. I'll find a blanket for you."

He followed me back to the first cell. I got an Army blanket and tossed it in on the bunk and stood back while he walked over and sat down. I looked at him for a minute and then stepped out and closed the door and locked it.

"Hey, what you lockin' the door for?" he demanded.

"City ordinance," I said. "Can't leave the jail open. Not since this here uranium strike. People sneak in and sack up. G' night." I went outside, then around the building to the back and crawled in my own jeep. When I came out on the street, Harve Bennion shot out of the newspaper office. I braked to a stop.

I leaned out and spoke to him. "I'm going up to Six Mile," I said. "Want to come?"

"What for at this time of night?"

"Furley's story don't ring true," I told him. "I'm gonna do a little checkin'."

He looked at me, half smiling. "Play detective, huh?"

"Something like that. Hop in."

"Not me." He shook his head. "Don't make an ass out of yourself, marshal. It happened just like he said it did."

"Don't think so," I said, and slipped the jeep in gear. "G' night, Harve."

"Good night, gumshoe," he said, mockingly.

The claim was kind of creepy in the moonlight. Sam had drifted back under a big ledge of rock, taking everything as he went. He had a two-ton flat car that ran on wooden rails down a gentle slope, ending at a slab wood and sheet iron dump. The dump was maybe a hundred and fifty feet from the mine entrance, and two hundred from the face, where Sam loaded ore. He'd load the car and ride it down to the dump and then him and Ike would dump it. It took two men to operate the thing Sam contrived himself, which tipped the car over. A hand-operated winch operated at the dump pulled the car back to the face.

I found Sam lying face down just a few feet off to one side of the wooden track. I turned him over and flicked my flashlight on. He'd been shot just above the left eye and hadn't bled much. His right eye was covered with his black eyepatch. I whistled between my teeth and stood up, knowing then that my hunch had been right.

I carried Sam into the cabin and laid him on the bed and went back out to the jeep. In town, I picked up Doc Watterson, the coroner, and drove on to the jail. Harve Bennion was coming out of the Lucky Strike when we parked and he saw us and sauntered over.

"What'd you find, marshal?" he asked, joking me, like he does.

"Come in and see," I said and pushed on into the jail. I went straight back to the cell with Doc and Harve following, and switched on the light.

Ike Furley was sitting on the bunk, just about like I'd left him. He got up and came to the bars and peered out at me. "I've changed my mind," he said in a shaky voice. "I want out."

"You won't be gettin' out," I said.

His jaw dropped and then he caught himself. "What the hell are you talkin' about?"

"You didn't do a real good job," I said. "Reckon Sam's gonna get over it."

"Like hell," Furley yelled. "I listened—"

"And made sure he was dead?" I shot back. "Well, I was just up there, Furley, and Sam told me the whole story!"

"It's a lie," he screeched. "A damn tricky lie."

"Ask the doc," I said. I swung around. "That right, doc?"

Doc tipped his head to one side. "Just grazed him," he said.

Furley just seemed to melt, and if he hadn't been hanging on the bars I believe he'd have fallen. He said, "Damned pious old idiot!"

Afterward, in the Lucky Strike, after Harve Bennion had phoned in another story, we had us a nightcap. And Harve kept insisting, "But how did you really know, marshal?"

"Old Sam's eyepatch," I said. "He wasn't blind, really, you know."

"No, I didn't know," Harve and Doc chorused.

"Well, no, he wasn't. Sam didn't use any artificial light, workin' that shallow drift. He wore the eyepatch so's he could see when he come out into the open. It was an old trick he learned workin' mules in a coal mine, he told me once. Inside, in the dark that patch covered his right eye. Ridin' the car out, when he'd get close to sunlight he'd switch it over to his left eye."

"And the patch was on his inside eye?" Harve chortled, shaking his head. "Fantastic as hell. Doesn't prove a thing."

I nodded. "Sure it doesn't. But I knew and Doc here backed me up."

Harve drained his glass and set it on the bar, shaking his head. "Good night, Mr. Holmes," he said and headed for the door.

Funny thing about Harve. I've known him since we fought in Ezra Rock's pear orchard, when we was both in the fifth grade and here he was calling me Mr. Holmes. I looked around the room at all them uranium hunters sopping it up and shook my head. Ezra Rock just didn't have a heart. Moab wouldn't be the same without that pear orchard.

LOYALTY

Two men were talking at the Grand Central depot yesterday, and one of them was telling about a difficulty he had recently been engaged in.

"He said I was the biggest liar ever heard in Texas," said the man, "and I jumped on him and blacked both his eyes in about a minute."

"That's right," said the other man, "a man ought to resent an imputation of that sort right away."

"It wasn't exactly that," said the first speaker, "but Tom Achiltree is a second cousin of mine, and I won't stand by and hear any man belittle him."

O. HENRY

mascot for murder

by . . . Norman Daniels

"Listen — if I didn't know about it, can they shoot me?"

COPS, especially detectives, have problems anywhere, but a cop in a town and state where gambling is legal gets himself one steady headache. Sure, the gamblers are in the open and under control, but not the hoods who back them. The people who do the gambling present a thousand more problems than average folks in an average town. If they win, they raise hell; if they lose, they raise hell. Either way the Department gets caught in the middle. We also get a lot of goofy complaints and requests. That's why I wasn't surprised at this one.

"A dame," Captain Miller said, "wants to meet a cop with brass. I figure a detective lieutenant will do. Get over to the Apache Arrow Bar and find a tall, platinum doll in a tweed travelling suit. Find out who she thinks rung in loaded dice, hold her pretty hand and take her home if necessary, but don't go in. She's got a husky voice and she sounds as if she might invite you."

It was better than kicking my

Norman Daniels returns to these pages with the story of why the girl was so scared—who she feared and why she thought she might be shot . . . Detective Lieutenant Baylor is sent out to comfort a confused girl—with the understanding that he mustn't comfort her too well—and finds himself shooting it out with a murderer who has gotten a shade careless, as murderers will. . . .

heels under the desk and I was glad of the break in the monotony of a quiet night. I took a cruiser and drove over to the Apache Arrow. It was a nice place—run by Charlie Harris who also ran a casino next door.

I was in no hurry. These dolls usually wait if it's important and if it isn't, I'd just as soon they blew. So I checked into Charlie's place first just to look around. I kept my eyes opened for shills, I looked for any razzle-dazzle plays at the crap tables. Charlie was once an expert at "razzle." It's played with eight dice, a couple of shills, a houseman with a remarkable gift of gab and a sucker. Charlie knew that if I ever even got a hint that he was running a razzle again, I'd have his license picked up even if he was backed by some powerful Chicago hoods.

Things looked quiet so I walked into the Apache Arrow bar next door which you could reach without risking a whiff of fresh air from outside. It was quite early for the big stuff. Just past the dinner hour and most of the clubs were putting on their tame floor shows for old maids and kids and tourists with strict wives. The real stuff was reserved for what they called the supper show—which meant anywhere between midnight and two A.M.

So I didn't have a hard time picking out the girl. She was all by herself at the end of the bar and she made an attractive picture the way the bar stool hiked her skirt up. She was pretty without being flashy. Her suit was medium-priced, her make-up applied without a professional touch and her hair looked as if it needed attention. You can always pick out the female tourists by their hair. Travelling by car seems to tousle it beyond the hope of making it look nice without a visit to a beauty parlor. Maybe that's why the town was so lousy with them.

So I had her pegged as an average girl—maybe 22. Back home she was either a typist or clerk in some office or—a housewife. I saw the wedding band on her finger and settled for the latter. I slid onto the stool beside her.

The barkeep flicked the spotless bar with his towel. "Anything for you, Lieutenant Baylor?"

I shook my head. The girl ran a bright red, pointed tongue around her lips and looked scared. For the first time I realized she was drunk. Not gentle or ladylike drunk, but plain soused. She'd have had nice gray eyes if they hadn't been so blank.

"You the cop?" she said.

"Dan Baylor, detective lieutenant," I said.

"Lemme see some badge."

I showed her and she finished the drink of straight whiskey

she certainly wasn't enjoying. I sat there, being patient about the whole thing. Sometimes people who want to talk to a cop, find it hard to begin the conversation.

"I wanna know something," she said. Her eyes narrowed just a little. "You sure you're a cop?"

"We can go down to my office if you like," I said.

She shuddered. "I didn't say I wanted to. Listen, I need some advice. Kinda legal advice. If I got mixed up in something I didn't understand or know about at the time, can they shoot me for it?"

"What do you mean—shoot?" I asked.

"Just what I said." She was trying to center me in her vision and not doing so good. "They lead you out, put a blindfold over your face, pin a target over your heart and then a firing squad shoots." She cocked her finger. "Like this . . . boom!"

"Spy stuff," I said.

"Spy hell," she said. "Listen—if I didn't know about it, can they shoot me?"

She was nuts. "That all depends on what you didn't know about. I need more details."

She wagged a finger under my nose. "Oh, no, you don't. And you're not taking me in either. You know why? Jo-Jo won't let you."

"Who's Jo-Jo?" I asked her, mainly to keep her talking so she'd sober up a little and I could send her to her hotel.

She opened a big purse and took out a four-inch brass figurine. The body was that of a man, but the face looked more like a Pekinese. It was ugly and I'd have thrown it away.

"That's Jo-Jo," she explained. "We call him that because we think he looks like a clown."

"Who is we?" I asked her.

"Steve . . . my husband. We bought Jo-Jo for good luck and boy, he's lousy with it. We won more money than I ever saw in my life."

"That's fine," I said. "Think you can make it home alone or shall I call your husband?"

"What kind of a cop are you? I asked a question."

I was sick of it. "Ordinarily you can't be shot for taking part in something that went on without your knowledge. Now how about finding your husband?"

She slid off the stool. I expected her to fold up, but she stood as straight as one of the neon arrows outside this dump. "Why'm I plastered?" she asked me. "I bet you think I'm celebrating on account of me and Steve won all that money. Ain't so. I'm drunk because I'm scared. If I wasn't drunk, I'd have the heebs. Now go away and lemme alone."

She walked with that stiff, straight hike of a lush who can't

relax a bit or he'll fall down. She had a nice shape. Very nice.

I saw it again two hours later, only this time the shape didn't have any clothes on it, but I got no kicks because she was lying face down in a bathtub half full of water and she was dead.

Her name was Elaine Cabot and she and her husband Steve had checked in two days ago. They came from a little town in Maine. She'd left me around eight and at nine-forty her husband had found her. Now he sat on the edge of the bed, watching us move around. The cigarette between his lips had gone out some time ago and his shirt was sprinkled with ashes. I sat down beside him.

"Tell me about it," I said.

"Nothing to tell, officer. That's the way I found her . . . in there. She walked away while I was playing at the Casino. I didn't know where she went. Then I came up here and . . . there she was."

"What do you think happened?" I asked him.

"How do I know? Last I saw her, she was plastered. You see, we won quite a lot of money and it sort of went to her head. I suppose she was so drunk she didn't know what she was doing. Maybe wanted a bath to sober up and fell asleep in the tub. I don't know."

"I saw her at eight in a bar," I said. "She was worried about being shot then."

"Shot?" No man could have looked more surprised.

"Yeah—by a firing squad. She was quite drunk."

"I shouldn't have left her alone," he said, "but I got into that game and I couldn't keep track of her."

"Where was the game?" I asked him.

"Charlie's. Charlie Harris."

I said, "Okay. If I were you, I'd go down to the bar and have a stiff one. They'll take her out pretty soon and it won't be so pleasant to watch."

"Thanks," he said. "Thanks. I was afraid they'd make me stay here. I . . . I'm not much good at this sort of thing. My God, her mother's going to feel awful."

I said, "Just one thing more. How much did you win?"

"A hundred and fifty thousand dollars," he said. "A fortune. That's what makes it tough. She always wanted lots of money."

"You won it all at Charlie's?"

"Sure. Why? Don't you think we won it legally?"

"If you won it at Charlie's, you did," I said. "If you lost, I'd question it. A word of advice. News travels fast about winners. Put that dough in a bank."

"I did already," he said. "I'm

going to have them send a cashier's check to my bank back home."

I let him go then and spent ten minutes searching the room. They only had a couple of suitcases so the job was easy. But easy or not, I didn't find Jo-Jo, the dog-faced statue.

The medical examiner wasn't sure. "It could have been an accident," he said. "Maybe an alcohol check of her brain will show it was more than possible. But there were a few light bruises on the back of her legs."

"The back, Doc?"

"Yes. They made me think of someone being held down with the legs free to kick around and maybe get bruised."

I went in and had a look for myself. The bruises were there alright. I turned the premises over to a sergeant who knew what to do and I took a walk over to Charlie's place. I glanced into the Apache Arrow and saw Steve Cabot bowed over a tall one. He looked like a man hit very hard.

Charlie's place was just beginning to buzz, but there was already a regular beehive around the door to one of the private rooms where stud was usually played. I got in via the elbow route and I was in time to see a mousy little girl with mouse-colored hair and a small, winsome sort of face reach out and drag in an armful of chips. Charlie himself was dealing and they were the only two playing. From the chips in front of her I gathered she had won about thirty grand and Charlie was having a bad night.

It was all very interesting—especially Jo-Jo the dog-faced statue that sat in all his ugliness at the girl's elbow. While I watched, I saw the girl bet on three tens. Charlie covered it, dealt himself three cards. The girl picked up a pair of treys for a full house. They'd removed the limits because she put a thousand dollars worth of chips in the middle of the table. Charlie raised it, she came back at him. It went like that—very fast, until Charlie's gambling sense told him this far and no farther. He had a full house too. Eights on sixes. The girl was about eight grand on that hand.

She patted Jo-Jo, smiled up at a young man who stood beside her and suddenly reached up to pull his head down. She kissed him. I moved over to the side of the young man.

"Who's the luck charm?" I asked. "You or the statue?"

"I'm her husband," he said. "Isn't this crazy? She just can't lose. She betters everything. Give her a pair of deuces and she gets four. Once she drew a straight to a king. Yeah—she held one card and filled it."

"Sometimes luck's a funny thing," I said. "Sometimes it

runs out too. A girl about your wife's age—a real lucky gambler too—was just found dead at her hotel. Maybe you know her. Elaine Cabot."

"Tough," he said. "Uh-uh—never heard of her. Hey, look—she's got four clubs. I'll give you ten to one she fills it."

I said, "Nh-nhhh . . . I live here. I don't gamble."

I left them just as she raked in another pot. Not so big this time. Charlie was getting cagey. I found Steve Cabot still at the bar and I sat down beside him.

"Another doll in there taking Charlie's money in big batches."

He just nodded. He wasn't very interested. If the drink before him was his first, he wasn't much of a drinker. It had hardly been touched.

"We figure your wife died about nine o'clock," I said. "I know she was alive at eight. When did you see her last?"

"Half past seven," he said in a dull voice. "She was plotzed then."

"Where were you at seven-thirty?"

He gestured with a thumb. "In there . . . Charlie's place. I was playing stud with a couple of guys. I was still playing when they called me."

His story was easy to check and I checked it. He was in the clear. I hung around until midnight and the mousy looking girl had enough. Just before she cashed in twenty-odd thousand in chips, I had a call from the medical examiner that Elaine had enough booze in her brain to have made drowning a cinch. It began to look like an accident—except for Jo-Jo. I had to be satisfied about him.

I waited about half an hour and I followed the girl and her husband to a motel. They had one of the cheaper cabins. Success wasn't going to their heads. A five-year-old green Dodge was parked outside. It carried Pennsylvania plates. I knocked on the door and the husband blocked my way.

I said, "I'm a cop."

He looked at the badge and let me in. The mousy girl wore a gray bathrobe and some tattered slippers. She looked very worried.

"Is there anything wrong with my winning all that money?" she asked. "Is it against the law or something?"

"Nothing like that," I said. "News of winners travels fast around here and there are always sharpshooters who would like to pry it loose from people like you. We make it a habit to visit heavy winners and advise them to put their cash in the bank, first thing."

"Oh," she said, "we've already done that."

I picked up Jo-Jo who sat in solitary state on top of the

dresser. "Good, you're very wise. This your mascot?"

Her husband answered that one. "Oh, heck, I don't believe in those things, but . . . well, let's face it, she's sure been lucky."

"Where'd you pick it up?" I asked.

"Is it any of your business?"

"Oh, Paul," she said. "He just asked a question. We bought it the day we got here—Wednesday—at a little shop close by the Trail Hotel."

"I know the place," I said. "My name is Lieutenant Baylor, just in case you need any help."

"Why, thank you," she said. "I'm Joan Ridgely and this is my husband Paul."

If she were a crook or a killer or even knew anything about the death of Elaine Cabot, I ought to turn in my badge because I couldn't see that plain, honest kid in any role but a housewife with kids pulling at her dress. Still Jo-Jo was the dead girl's mascot and turning up here made the Ridgelys suspicious.

I shook hands with Paul and left. I drove to town and stopped in front of Joe Vedera's curio store and hockshop. One thing in favor of being a cop in this town, nothing closes up until near dawn.

Verdera had a small shop and he did a fair business selling curios and a good business providing plane fare for the trip back home to suckers. He knew me and he didn't like me.

The feeling was more than mutual.

"What the hell do you want?" he asked me. Joe was a nasty guy by birth. He had to be. Nobody could develop a lousy disposition like that.

"I'm looking for some brass figures," I said. "Homely ones." I went from one counter to another. "You know — luck charms."

"You don't believe in that bunk and neither do I," he said. "What the devil are you driving at?"

I saw the Jo-Jos. There were three more of them. I aimed my finger at the display. "Those, pal."

"What about 'em?"

"Sold any lately?"

"I'm in business to sell. I get rid of a lot of that junk every day. If you're asking who bought them, you're wasting time."

I said, "Your main business is taking merchandise in pawn. You've got to have a police license for that which makes it my business and I have authority. I'm closing you up, Joe, as of now. Give me that license and then start locking the door."

"Aw, come off it, Lieutenant," he whined.

"I'll give you five minutes, Joe."

"I sold two of them stupid things this week. To some suckers who figured they were good luck."

"Did you tell them they were good luck?"

"Maybe I did. So what? Nobody believes in that junk."

"Describe the people who bought them."

"One was bought by a dame who looked like she could use some luck. Kinda run down, you know. The other went to a flashy number."

So there *were* two Jo-Jos. Joan Ridgely bought one, Elaine Cabot the other. There went my mystery. I should have been satisfied and checked off the job and gone home to Judy who worried so much about me she kept cop hours too. I was tempted, but there were two things I didn't like. The bruises on Elaine's legs and the fact that she and Joan both were exceptionally heavy winners at Charlie's place. Jo-Jo wasn't providing the luck. I'd have bought them all if I had any faith—and taken Charlie and every other dealer in town and retired with a million.

When I came out of the hockshop, this character was across the street. He was watching me and he wasn't doing a very good job of it. I thought somebody had started trailing me when I hit the outskirts of town. I wanted to make sure so I left my car where it was and walked a couple of blocks. Sure enough, he came after me.

I headed for one of the quiet streets off the main drag and when I turned down it, I was the only person in the block—until the guy behind me came moving a little too fast around the corner. By that time I was already retracing my steps. All he could do was keep coming so that we passed one another.

I said, "Hold it, Parker."

He stopped, spat away the cigarette and raised his arms for a frisk. I obliged him, but I didn't let him know I realized he was following me.

"You stay off these quiet streets," I said. "Or I'll run you in on suspicion."

"I'm being persecuted," he said with a whine.

"Nobody who served four stretches should feel persecuted," I told him. "Beat it."

He got out of there very fast. By the time I reached Headquarters, there was another tail on me. I wondered if he was also a Charlie Harris hanger-on like that punk Parker.

I made a phone call to the State Police Headquarters in Salt Lake City. I was working purely on a hunch. After I hung up, I exchanged my .38 service pistol for a .45 automatic with a hair trigger. One pull and the

thing turned into a burp gun. I took along extra clips and walked to Charlie's place. It was going strong and I thought—look who came back!

The mousy number—Joan Ridgely by name—was hauling it in again. Last I'd seen, she was in a bathrobe and ready for the hay. Her husband stood behind her, Jo-Jo stood beside her. The one-two combination. Charlie laid down three aces and winced at the little bitty straight she had. He had a crowd around now and Charlie liked to play the good loser. He pushed every chip he had into the middle of the table.

"Turn of a card," he said. "One card. If you break me, don't come back."

Joan hesitated. Her husband whispered in her ear. She patted Jo-Jo on the head, counted chips, covered Charlie's bet and cut the deck for a seven. Charlie cut for a five, pushed back his chair and walked out. Joan gave a little squeal of delight. I watched her cash in a lot of thousands of dollars and then I moved up. Paul eyed me with suspicion.

I said, "Nice going. I'll stick until you get it in the bank. We can use the night depository."

"That's awfully kind of you, Lieutenant," Joan said. "I'll feel much safer."

Paul didn't have any comments. I asked Joan if they'd come right out here from Pennsylvania and she said no—they'd gone first to Oregon and were on their way home by a more southerly route when they hit my town. We got talking of routes and she named some. She'd come down through Utah among other states.

I left them, found my car and drove straight out to their motel. I parked where my bus wouldn't be seen, paid the motel manager a visit and got him to unlock their cabin. I entered the bathroom and sat down on the only comfortable place, to wait for them.

It didn't take long. When the door to the motel burst open, Joan was sobbing as if her heart would break. I heard Paul curse her out and there was the sound of a hard slap and another cry which turned into a moan.

Paul said, "I told you not to talk about anything in this lousy town. I told you even cops are crooked and if we're held up for that dough . . ."

"But he insisted we put it in the night depository, Paul," she cried. "Have you gone crazy? Paul . . . I've never seen you like this . . ."

He was going to slug her again and I don't want that nice kid hit any more so I opened the door and stepped out. She was on the bed, one side of her face was all red and swollen and her eyes were damp.

Paul stared at me as if I'd

materialized right on the spot. He grumbled at me, took a cigarette out of his pocket and stuck it in his mouth. He hunted for a match, walked over to the dresser and opened the middle drawer. He said, "You're getting in my hair, Lieutenant. Who are you after—my wife?"

I said, "No—you."

He swung around with a nickle-plated revolver in his fist. I never gave him a chance. I make it a practice not to. That's why I'm alive. I hit him at least five times in the chest, almost in the same spot. I told you that automatic worked like a tommy gun.

Joan screamed and then buried her head in the bed covers until I persuaded her to get up, keep her eyes closed and I led her out to the car. The manager was running toward us. I told him to phone Headquarters. I put Joan in my car and she promised to wait. I think she knew then that she'd married a wrongo and I was trying to help her.

I cleaned up matters in jig time and drove Joan to Headquarters. She waited in my office while I went to the Apache Arrow bar. Steve Cabot was still there, still sober. I stepped up behind him.

"It's a pinch," I said. "If you have any ideas about going for a gun, I might say that Paul is dead. I killed him."

Steve didn't have any fight. I locked him up. It was all done very quietly. I hoped nobody even noticed us leave. Twenty minutes later I was back. The moment I stepped inside Charlie's main gambling room, I knew I'd pulled a boner.

Parker was there, along with a couple of punks you buy for five bucks and a gun. Charlie was at the far end of the room, moving as close to the crowds around two roulette tables as possible. He could shoot me without much trouble, but I couldn't shoot back because I might hit too many tourists. I looked at my watch. The detail should have the place covered now. When Charlie sailed out, they'd grab him, but it was up to me to give him the hot foot that would get him started.

I knew Parker was moving up behind me. There was a fresh clip in my gun and I didn't care much one way or another if I killed him. But he was being sided by two pals. I could see them in the big mirror toward which I was walking. They knew I was bound to turn. They also knew some of their slugs would go wild and rip into the crowds, but that didn't bother them. I took a breath, wondering if it would be my last, wondering if I could get away with it and not have anybody else hurt. It took timing, speed and luck. Mostly

luck. I wished I had Jo-Jo's head to pat.

I stuck my hand into my pocket as I twisted. Nobody had drawn yet so I had a split second's advantage. I fired through my pocket and the gun worked just as fast there. The man on Parker's right went back and back, while he thrust out both hands as if to ward off whatever pushed him. You just don't ward off four .45 slugs with your hands making foolish gestures.

Parker cleared his gun about the time my stream of bullets splattered against his chest. The other one just stuck both arms as high as he could get them. On him I found Elaine's Jo-Jo and the cuffs of his woolen jacket were still damp from having been shoved into the water while he held Elaine down until she drowned.

Charlie? Well—he tried to draw and got shellacked with a couple of nightsticks. He'll probably never be the same though it doesn't make much difference because they'll shoot him or hang him anyway. Yeah —I said shoot!

I explained it for the Chief's benefit and to help soothe Joan, who didn't rate any of this. I said, "Charlie, Paul and Steve all met in an army stockade a long time ago and found they had a lot of interests in common. It was easy to check the fact that they must have known one another even if they lied about it. So—they set this one up real nice. They hit a payroll in Salt Lake City and got away with half a million. They killed two men doing it.

"Charlie was treasurer. He beat it back home with the dough. After a while, Paul and Steve who were quiet, respected young men in their home towns, came here on vacation with their wives. The women were steered to a place where they bought these good luck charms. Then they started gambling at good old Charlie's and the women won. Brother, they were the two luckiest women in the state."

"I don't doubt a word of it, Lieutenant," the Chief said, "but would you mind telling me how you guessed all this?"

"I didn't guess. I knew. Elaine told me before they killed her. Somehow she guessed that Steve was in that Salt Lake City job. He'll tell us how she knew if we persuade him. Anyway she got worried that she was in trouble too, even though she didn't know a thing about the job when it was pulled. So she asked for a cop, drew me, and the first thing she wanted to know was—could they shoot her for being an accessory. It sounded crazy, but she made sense. In Utah, a condemned man has a choice of being hung or executed by a firing squad. So I

knew whatever happened took place in Utah and that stickup was it.

"Then Joan told me she and Paul had driven through Utah. That made him so sore he beat her up. I had everything I needed then. I had them tied up."

"Except why Charlie let them win all that dough," the Chief said. "I've got a glimmer of why, but I'm not sure."

"I'll spell it out," I said. "It's so ingenious a scheme it sounds impossible, but it was the one crooked idea I ever heard of that made so much sense it would have worked fine. Paul and Steve had fine reputations at home. They were married, lived quietly and within their means. They were nice boys. So —how could they spread all that loot around without being suspected of something? They came here—stopped off, their wives won a lot of money. It was all legal . . . everybody knew about it. Our bank would send the money to their banks. They could go home, put Jo-Jo on the shelf over the fireplace, say he was their luck charm and live very nicely on the dough. It was all explained, nice and legal.

"But the hood they assigned to kill Elaine when Steve reported she was getting wise—he bungled it. He must have believed Jo-Jo really was lucky because he swiped Elaine's. I'd already met Jo-Jo and after I knew he was missing and his twin turned up as Joan's mascot, I got started."

I had to repeat the whole thing for my wife's benefit when I got home. She heard it all. She asked me what Joan looked like and I told her. She stopped worrying after that. In fact, she thought I was a pretty good cop.

death in the bathroom

by . . . Julian Symons

Magerson had defied death in far places. Surely there was little to fear in that quiet London hotel!

"IF I WERE to commit a murder," Francis Quarles said, casting a slightly menacing glance at his friend, the author Brian Teale, "I should use the simplest possible method. The overturned rowing boat, the push over the cliff, or better still off the edge of a crowded Underground platform—from a murderer's point of view there can be nothing better than these simple recipes. The more fanciful and ingenious ways of committing murder are flattering to the murderer's vanity—how clever I am to have thought of *that*—but they are dangerous, because usually once the method has been discovered the murderer's identity is clear."

"Example, please," Teale said.

"Why, certainly. Do you remember the case of Professor Roger Magerson?"

"No. I must have been out of England. The name rings no bell at all."

"So much the better. Magerson had just returned from a trip to several of the South

When Francis Quarles undertakes an armchair solution of a murder there is nothing off-stage about it. You see the murder itself happen before your very eyes. There's a temptation to tap Quarles on the shoulder and warn him not to stand quite so close to the gentleman with the arsenic-tainted wineglass, a tribute to Julian Symons' ability to create a sleuth whose essays in literate mayhem have made him a favorite with readers on both sides of the Atlantic.

American republics, very excited because he'd found some new varieties of snakes, some peculiarly unpleasant scorpions, and so on. He arrived in London accompanied by his ever-faithful wife Rosalind, who always went on these expeditions with him, and stayed at Smith's, which as you know is an eminently respectable hotel. Magerson had timed his return so that he would be able to address some International Congress, then meeting in London, on the subject of his discoveries. He particularly looked forward to putting out of joint the nose of a rival named Professor Claypoole, with whom he'd had a great controversy a year or two earlier about the habits of scorpions.

"Magerson was found dead in his bath at Smith's Hotel about seven-thirty in the evening. The times and circumstances are important.

"Magerson's room hadn't a bathroom attached to it. He and his wife shared a bathroom with the room across the passage, which was occupied by an irascible retired Colonel named Pickles. Magerson, who was also pretty irritable, had been infuriated, his wife said afterwards, by the fact that Pickles took a bath at exactly seven o'clock every evening, just the time when Magerson himself liked to bath.

On this particular evening Magerson was intending to steal a march on Pickles by getting into the bathroom just before seven. It was an important evening for him, because he'd invited Claypoole and two other eminent figures attending the Congress to dinner. There he was going to reveal his discoveries, and crow. Magerson's young secretary Giles Wendle, who had been on the expedition but wasn't staying at Smith's, was also coming to dinner.

"Wives, even ever-faithful wives, weren't wanted at such a function. Rosalind Magerson went out at six-thirty to dine with a woman friend. She was seen to leave the hotel, and arrived at her friend's apartment just before seven. At two or three minutes before seven, also, a chambermaid in the hotel saw Magerson come out of his room and go into the bathroom.

"At seven o'clock precisely, Pickles came out of his room, tried the bathroom door, found it locked, and returned fuming to his room. He tried the door at intervals of five minutes afterwards, with no success.

"At a quarter past seven Giles Wendle, Claypoole, and the two other guests arrived. Wendle telephoned up to Magerson's room, but of course got no reply.

"At twenty past seven Pickles was almost apoplectic with rage. He thumped and shouted

on the bathroom door, got no answer, and went to call the manager. The manager and Pickles got back to the bathroom at the same time as Giles Wendle, who had come upstairs to investigate. The manager called, and then used his passkey to unlock the door.

"They found Magerson in the bath. He'd been using the spray attachment to the bath and it was still on, in the water, so that water was going out through the overflow. Magerson had slipped from under the water, and his lungs were full of it. He was quite dead." Quarles paused, and looked at Teale with a quizzical eye.

"Well," Teale said questioningly, and added: "I don't see any puzzle."

"Of course there was no dinner party. Rosalind Magerson was telephoned—Wendle knew where she was—and arrived in a state of collapse. A doctor who lived a couple of doors away was called in. Man was dead, lungs full of water, not much doubt about cause of death you'd think. Must have had a heart attack, seizure of some sort. Caused him to slip under the water. So sudden couldn't even ring the bell for help. Obvious thing, wouldn't you say?"

"Yes, I should." Teale was bold enough to say further, "I don't see why anyone should think anything else."

"No." Quarles rubbed his big chin reflectively. "Bad luck for the murderer in a way. I happened to be staying at Smith's. I liked old Magerson. He was a character, although a rough and tough one. It so happened I'd seen Magerson a couple of days before and he told me his doctor had just given him a thorough going over. The physician assured him he was sound as a bell; and should be good for another twenty years."

"Even so, doctors can be wrong," Teale objected.

"Doctors can be wrong. But you'll understand why, when I happened to arrive on the scene just after Magerson's body was found, I looked at it with special interest. I found something unusual. I'll show it to you. It was underneath the body. Magerson must have fallen on it when he slipped down in the bath." From a glass-faced cupboard Quarles took something that reposed on a bed of velvet.

Teale examined the object. It was perhaps half an inch long. The point was as sharp as a gramophone needle and the body was a small round sac, sealed at the other end. "You mean this little thing killed Magerson?"

"Yes. It contained one of those poisons used by pygmies in Africa and South America, and formerly used by North American Indians, which don't

kill but cause paralysis very quickly. There was a tiny puncture on Magerson's chest—so tiny that the doctor might have missed it if I hadn't asked him to look. When Magerson became paralyzed and slipped down in the bath this poison dart—that's what it was really—dropped out. If the bath had been emptied, it would have gone down the drain and the only evidence of murder would have disappeared."

"You said it was a poison dart. It was fired at Magerson then." Teale's brow was corrugated in puzzlement.

"Yes."

"You said the puncture was on his chest. Was there a window on that side of the room?"

Quarles shook his head. "There was no window anywhere in the room."

"A glass roof perhaps?"

Quarles shook his head again. "There was no means of exit or entry to the room at all apart from the door."

"Then it must have been fired through the keyhole. Though I really can't see anyone kneeling outside the door with a blowpipe in his hand."

"It wasn't shot through the keyhole."

"I've got it," Teale said excitedly. "Magerson was alive, and for some reason didn't answer Pickles. The hotel manager was the first person in the room and—" His voice died away.

"No. Magerson died shortly after entering the bath. Let me give you a clue. The water in the bathrooms at Smith's came, in a quite unorthodox manner, direct off the rising main. The pressure was accordingly very strong."

"The pressure was very strong." Teale thought hard and then almost shouted. "The sprayer."

"The sprayer. I found a very thin smear of sticky material over the sprayer, just enough to check the flow of water without altogether stopping it. The dart had been fixed in one of the jets which hadn't been sprayed. When Magerson turned the shower on, it popped out as if it had been fired from an air gun. We experimented later."

"Very ingenious," Teale said. "But you said it pointed to a particular person. I don't quite see—"

"Why, yes. Magerson's killer was the person who had easiest access to his poisons, who knew he was going to bath on that particular evening before Colonel Pickles, who knew that in the bath he always used the spray attachment. Only one person could have known those last two things. Magerson's murderess—she'd fallen in love with the young secretary Wendle, and thought that when she was a widow her love might be returned—was his ever-faithful wife Rosalind."

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