
TOP SECRET
THE MAGAZINE OF THE SECRET SERVICES
AMERICAN AGENT
AUGUST
35¢
CLOAK AND DAGGER IN ACTION
AN ORIGINAL $2.75 NOVEL COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE
OPERATION: MAN ON THE RUN
by JOHN KENNEDY
Terror in the tropics with spies and sudden death stalking one man and one lovely woman

LISTEN

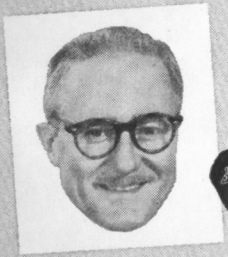
for these stars in new, exciting radio programs on your local radio station

Listen to LEE BOWMAN

Lee Bowman not only believes variety is the spice of life, but he lives it. Giving up a law career for the stage, Lee appeared in movies opposite Rita Hayworth, Susan Hayward, Doris Day, and on radio-TV did all the top dramatic shows. Now Lee broadens his field still further by starring in the new radio spy-series "American Agent".

Listen to Westbrook Van Voorhis

Westbrook Van Voorhis has the distinction of being called the best-known voice in America. You've heard him as the "Voice of Time" for more than twenty years on the radio and the same number of years on the motion picture screen in the "March Of Time". Now you can hear him doing his very latest series "Our Heritage".



Listen to PETER DONALD

Peter Donald is known as the busiest and most traveled toastmaster, after-dinner speaker and master-of-ceremonies in the Western Hemisphere. He is best identified as the dialect gagmaster for fifteen years on "Can You Top This" and five years on the "Fred Allen Show". Now you can hear his best performance and gags on "Gag Bag".

AMERICAN AGENT

VOL. 1, NO. 2 AUGUST 1957

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR ..... **Lyle Kenyon Engel**
PRODUCTION ..... **Marla Ray**
LAYOUT ..... **David Hymes**
FRONT COVER & ILLUSTRATIONS .. **Victor Olson**

AMERICAN AGENT MAGAZINE, Vol. 1, No. 2. Published bimonthly by Republic Features Syndicate, Inc., 39 West 55th Street, New York 19, New York 35c a copy. Subscriptions accepted in the U. S. only, based on cover price. Application for Second Class Entry pending at Chicago, Ill. Printed in U.S.A. All manuscripts submitted to this address must be accompanied by sufficient return postage and self-addressed return envelope. Lyle Kenyon Engel, President; Marla Ray, Manager.

OPERATION MAN-ON-THE-RUN

By JOHN KENNEDY

MONDAY, JUNE 17

The guard stood up in his improvised shelter as soon as he saw the man come around the bend in the beach. He knew what he was guarding; he knew no one was allowed on this beach or near this building. Sure and unhurried, but without hesitation, he raised his rifle to his shoulder and took aim.

Jess Butler waved, but only once. He stumbled back as a bullet sprayed the sand at his feet. The guard was shooting at him. He started to yell, "What's the matter are you crazy?" He didn't yell. Not when another bullet screamed past him. He hit the beach, flat.

That was no good. Lying flat on the beach he was as visible as ever, and a lot slower. He had to get to cover. Back away from the beach, toward the hills, there was a pile of rock. His mind kept ringing, "What's the matter with the guy, what's the matter with the guy?" but there was no stopping to ask him. He got up and made a run for the rocks. Again a bullet, close enough to hear it sing. He ducked behind the rocks as a bullet hit there, splintering off rock with a mind-shattering crash.

He sat behind the rocks, breathless, waiting for more shots. There were none. He wondered if the guard had come to his senses. Cautiously he looked out from behind the rock, then ducked back quickly as another bullet hit the rock, inches from his face. The guard was out of the enclosure, coming after him. He had to get away. Now. Not far away the undergrowth began, and grew higher as the hills rose behind. He took a deep breath and a running jump and landed flat in the shrubbery, yards away. He waited for bullets to fall around where he had landed. None came. He began to inch his way along on his stomach.

He was soon in the heavier undergrowth on the hillside. It was almost dark. Now he could stand up, take a deep breath, but still not stop to wonder what the Medoc Mining Company had that it was guarding so tight. The hill was steep, but not high. He climbed swiftly on up and ran down the other side to the beach.

He slowed down to a walk then. He was far enough away to be out of danger. Whatever

Medoc had, he thought, they could keep it. If it *was* the mining company. It couldn't be gold; he was sure they weren't in production yet. He hadn't even thought of their having rebuilt the old pier he had walked down to see. Mining supplies to be taken up into the mountains later? Perhaps. That still didn't explain much. Easy to say that in an area where Communist guerillas roamed at night they shot first and asked later. But in the day, and at a white man—that explanation didn't hold water.

He wanted to get back to Paco Point, bad. It was a long three miles and he sank down wearily in his cottage when he got there. Finally he stripped off the bathing suit and went into the bathroom to wash off the salt and sand and leafstains and dirt.

The cottage was an odd combination of primitive and modern —rubber foam mattress and modern furniture; bamboo floor and a bathroom whose plumbing system consisted of a drum on the roof. He pulled the wire that operated the water valve from the drum above, soaped all over thoroughly, then pulled the wire again and stood under the water until he was rinsed off, clean and cool.

He felt better when he had his clothes on again, and he decided to go on over to the Villa, the

main building of the resort, and see about getting something to eat. The incident was beginning to assume different proportions in his mind. It didn't make being shot at any more pleasant, but in a fairly remote part of the Philippines like this, a trigger-happy guard was understandable, he told himself.

Surprisingly, there were cars at the Villa when he came up. He hadn't thought anyone would be coming this late. The forty-seven kilometer road between Mankaro and the resort at Paco Point, safe enough during the day, was no place to take a chance on being caught on at night. They'd made it all right, though; two cars and an army jeep with the numbers painted out, all over a solid olive drab—a surplus jeep.

His interest quickened when he saw that one of the guests was sitting on the veranda of the Villa, stretched out in a chair with a glass in her hand. This makes the trip worthwhile, he thought. She had black hair and a smooth ivory skin and a soft, clinging dress that revealed every line of a perfect figure. She looked soft and yielding, and yet somehow capable, too, as if she were used to giving orders.

She looked up at him and smiled, showing small, sharp white teeth. "Hello," she said. "I was wondering where you were. Would you like a drink?"

A drink was what he needed most at this point. He dropped into the chair next to her and said, "I think a Scotch and soda would go great right now."

She turned and called, "Jose!" sharply, and when the boy appeared she told him to bring the drink.

Jess looked at her speculatively. She was very much at home here; he wondered who she could be. There certainly hadn't been anyone like this two years ago when he'd been here last. He said, "My name's Jess Butler."

She said, "I know. I'm Rita Santos." The boy brought the Scotch and set it down on the small table by Jess.

"You know?"

"Why, yes, I'm the Senator's secretary. They told me as soon as I arrived."

He was lost. He took a sip of his drink and said, "Senator?"

She looked surprised. "Senator Arias. Didn't you know? He owns this place now."

Senator Arias. He whistled under his breath. Senator Arias was one of the most important politicians in the Philippines, immensely powerful, with a hand in every graft and crooked scheme in the country. Just now he was out of public life temporarily; a particularly ugly scandal had broken that had made it wise for even Senator Arias to pass a term. The memory of that had passed quickly, though; he still had the power, still sat in with the clique that ruled the country. Jess said, "No, I didn't know. I only talked

to one boy, and all I got out of him was that Colonel Parker wasn't running the place any more."

"No, he went back to the States. About a year ago."

"That's a surprise. When I was here before it looked to me like he was here for life."

She shrugged faintly. "Which boy did you talk to? I can't think how you persuaded him to give you a cottage. This is not a resort any more."

Not a resort any more—that explained why the cottages were all shut up. He had got into something this time. Senator Arias was no person to get tangled up with. He said apologetically, "Look, I'm awfully sorry. I confess I bribed the boy, rather than drive back to Mankaro tonight. When he said 'No more rooms' I just thought he meant no vacancies." He looked at her ruefully. "I can't very well leave now, but I will get out early in the morning."

As though she hadn't heard him she said again, "I was wondering where you were. They told me you were here."

Jess drained the last of his drink and told her, "I was on the firing line. A guy at the bodega down there thought I was getting too close."

"Firing line?" she said sharply. "The shots—were they firing at you? What were you doing down there? There's a sign just on the other side of our fence that plainly says 'No Tresspassing'."

'I'm doing everything wrong, I guess," he told her. "I didn't go across the fence; I was down at the beach here. I got tired of just sitting there alone, so I swam around, past the rocks and the cliff at the end of the Point, to the other side." He shrugged helplessly. "I don't know why—just killing time, I thought I'd walk down to the old pier that I remembered from before. I didn't know Medoc had rebuilt it, or that they'd started operations again."

"Medoc?" she said. "Oh, the Medoc Mining Company. I guess they aren't used to seeing people come up the beach there. I wouldn't go back down there if I were you. That isn't part of the Villa. They have to be careful nowadays."

"Yeah, I looked so much like a Huk bandit there in my bathing suit, waving my arms," Jess said drily.

"Why did you come here?" she asked.

He shrugged. "For a vacation—why else? I've been on a tough job and I wanted to get away and just vegetate for a week. I was here a couple of years ago, you know, when Colonel Parker had it. It was such a nice, quiet place, with not too many guests, that I thought it would be just the thing."

She had noticed that his glass was empty and she called to the boy to bring another one. Then she went on, "Where did you

come from? You said you'd been on a tough job?"

Again that probing, questioning curiosity. He looked at her for a moment before answering, but her face was pleasant and noncommittal, with just a trace of polite interest. It was no secret where he had been, certainly. He said, "I've been up north, building the road from San Nicolas to Zaragosa." He shifted his big body comfortably at the thought of that job. His first big job on his own and he'd stayed right there with it and made a success of it.

"Oh, you build roads?"

"Yes, Butler Construction Company." He smiled a little proudly at the sound of that. "We build anything, but mostly roads. You might point out to the Senator that the road from Mankaro to Paco Point needs rebuilding—or building might be a better word."

"The Senator isn't in the government any more," she said distantly. "I don't think he could help you there."

Apparently she had finished her cross-examination. She looked away and they said nothing for a moment. There were one or two things that Jess wanted to ask, now, though. He said, "The Senator's not staying here now?"

She turned back to him. "Oh, yes," she said. "He'll be coming later."

He had hoped not to have to run into Senator Arias. He said in surprise, "Through this country, at night?"

"Senator Arias is widely known and greatly loved," she said oratorically. "He'll be in no danger."

Jess raised his eyebrows. "It's a chance I wouldn't want to take," he said. There was one other thing that he wondered about. He said, "The Senator keeps this place up very well since it isn't a resort any more . . ."

"It's still used a great deal. The Senator's friends visit here very often, and use the cottages—more like a club now." Jess had a picture of the kind of club Senator Arias was running, where he and his political cronies could get away to map out the tight little deals they put through on the unsuspecting public, or bring their girl friends, or work up or sleep off a drunk. "In fact," she went on, "the President's coming on Friday. He'll dedicate the new market in Mankaro, and he and his party will spend the weekend here."

The President. Proof of his estimate of Arias' undiminished power. He saw her look up then and followed her gaze as three men came out of the Villa onto the veranda. Rita Santos said, "These are the Senator's assistants, Mr. Butler. Mr. Lopez, Mr. Bautista, Mr. Cruz." They were big men, over six feet, extremely tall for Filipinos, dark and heavy set. To Jess they looked more like bodyguards than assistants. He stood up. None of the three offered to shake hands.

The one called Lopez scowled.

"What are you doing here?" he asked harshly. "This is not a public resort."

"It's all right," the girl cut in. "He's going early in the morning."

"He'll go tonight," Lopez said. "And in a hurry."

Angrily, Jess told him, "What's the matter with you? The boy rented me a cottage and I'm going to stay here tonight. Do you want me to get ambushed by the Huks out there on the road to Mankaro?"

"We're not renting cottages. I don't care what happens to you on the road."

"Lopez! It's all right," the girl said sharply.

"Senator Arias won't like it," the one named Cruz said.

"I'll be the one to decide about that," she retorted. They were tense and silent for a moment. Then she smiled and said carefully, "What would Mr. Butler think of our hospitality if you asked him to leave now—and what would other people think if they heard of it?"

"We'll see when the Senator comes," Lopez growled.

"I'm sure the Senator will want him to stay until tomorrow," she said. Then, more cheerfully, "Come on, stop glowering, all of you. Sit down and have a drink." She called to Jose. "Mr. Butler was just telling me he thought we needed a new road to Paco Point."

The drinks came, but did little to ease the situation. Conversation dragged on slowly, most of it made by the Senator's secretary. The three men sat close together and said nothing except to answer shortly when she spoke to one of them. Jess thought he knew what Lopez was feeling; he had been put in his place, in public, and before an American. Finally Jose came and announced that dinner was ready.

They went inside to where dinner had been laid for all five at one large table in a corner of the enormous *sala*. It was typical Filipino cooking, heavy with garlic and with large bowls of rice at each corner of the table. The men plowed through it silently, quickly emptying the rice bowls. The girl made only desultory attempts at conversation. Finally she said, "I have some work to do before the Senator comes. Will you excuse me?" She got up and went across the room and into the office. Quickly Jess excused himself too. None of the men looked up.

This is really a mess, he thought as he walked down to his cottage. I'm certainly the unwelcome guest here. He walked into the cottage. It was hot in spite of the floor of bamboo strips that let the air in from beneath. Someone had closed the shutters again. He opened one quickly and sat down trying to decide where to spend the rest of the vacation that had started so poorly. He could barge in on Chito Serrano and his gang at their camp at Iba Beach, he thought, but that was so remote as to be almost inaccessible except by small plane. He shook his head. Probably he'd spend a week in the bar of the Somerset House in Manila, and call it a vacation.

He thought of sending word to his foreman, Tim Cristobal, who was still at the road camp,

that he'd be in Manila instead of Paco Point, if anything came up. He looked around for paper, but there was none in the cottage. Let it go, he thought, and then decided he'd better get the letter written so that he could mail it at Mankaro when he passed through in the morning. At least the girl was friendly enough; he'd borrow some paper from her.

There was a brilliant moon. It cast long, jutting shadows across the Point as Jess walked quickly up to the Villa. Again there was the menacing silence, without a sound except the distant soft noise of the surf breaking on the beach. Even his footsteps made no sound as they fell in the loose sand of the path. The sala of the Villa was dark. Half relieved, half irritated, he started to turn back to the cottage, but as he came nearer he could see at the far end of the sala the office door open, the light shining brilliantly inside.

Quickly he walked down the dark length of the sala and around the counter to the office. "Hello," he said as he went in. "Can I—" There was no one there.

He stood uneasily, looking around the office. It had had a roll-top desk and two shabby rattan chairs before, but the Senator's tastes ran to steel desks and filing cabinets. Half one wall seemed to be a built-in metal storage cabinet with several compartments, all closed.

There were papers out on the desk. He hesitated, wondering whether to wait for her to come back or to get out of the office and forget the letter. There was a sound behind him. He turned, glad she was back. It wasn't the girl. It was Lopez, standing steadily, watching him. He was holding a .45. The click of the safety going off seemed to echo in the silence.

They stood eyeing each other, not saying anything. Lopez moved suddenly around to the desk, still holding the gun on Butler. He leafed quickly through the papers on the desk with one hand. Jess said, "Where's the Senator's secretary? I came up to borrow some paper for a letter."

Lopez ignored him. He swept the papers off the desk into a drawer, locked it, pocketed the key. Finally he said, "Get out of here. Go on back to your cottage and don't leave it again."

"Who the hell do you think you're giving orders to—"

There was no arguing with a .45. Lopez waved it impatiently. "You could go feet first," he said harshly.

This was more than a piece of paper was worth. Jess shrugged and turned to walk back through the sala. Lopez followed him all the way to the veranda, still holding the gun. "Stay in the cottage if you want to stay healthy," he said shortly. He stood on the veranda and watched as Jess went back to the cottage.

He sat gripping the arms of the rattan chair in fury at the way he

had been ordered back to the cottage by one of the Senator's punks. He stood up angrily, paced back and forth, the sturdy bamboo floor giving resiliently beneath his weight. There was more to the situation than the mere fact that the resort was closed to the public. The secretary pumping him to find out why he had come, then insisting on his staying—so that no one could wonder at his being thrown out in the middle of the night? What papers were there that were so important? The Medoc bodega—

The Medoc bodega must be the key. He was suddenly determined to go back to it, get close enough to it this time to find out what was there. He'd find out what the mystery was, why his coming had upset every one so, why guards fired so readily. His jaw squared. Maybe he'd put a spoke in whatever black market deal they were pulling off.

Impulsively he started to the door, then stopped. Lopez might still be on the veranda, watching. He moved back, to one of the windows. The floor of the cottage was about four feet from the ground. He lifted himself up to the window sill, dropped easily, silently, out, beyond the shrubbery, into the heavy shadow the cottage cast in the moonlight.

He reached up and closed the shutter, then stole quickly along toward the rear of Paco Point. It occurred to him that there were probably guards at night. He stopped in shadow, listening. He could hear nothing. He reached the fence, followed it to where it ended at the cliff behind the Villa. Hanging onto the last post he swung around to the other side of the fence, walked a short distance to where the cliff began to be less abrupt, and started down to the beach. There were loose rocks here. One dislodged and went crashing down against the eerie silence. He flattened back into the shadow, his heart pounding, waiting for guards, shots. None came. He started on down, stepping carefully, until he reached the beach.

He walked swiftly in the shadows until he reached the bend before the Medoc pier. Then it was time to move back in, get off the beach, go up across the small hill he had climbed in the afternoon. Carefully he picked his way into the shrubbery, moving up the hill. The stunted trees began; it was dark beneath them, hard going. He tried to keep moving up, not knowing if he was going out of his way. Finally he was on the way down the other side, moving slowly, silently, not to make any noise.

Now he could begin to see the bodega in the distance. It was dark, without a sign of life. He wondered if he could get close to it. He remembered that the area was cleared for several yards outside the fence. He moved along through the foliage, parallelling the side of the building, toward

the rear. He stopped suddenly, crouched down. There was activity there.

He rose, moved on, to get as close as possible. There were trucks at that end of the enclosure, big covered trucks. One at the opened doors of the bodega, another waiting. There was no light outside the bodega, but from inside light streamed on men busily loading heavy cases onto the truck. They worked steadily, passing the cases on up to men in the truck, in a sort of silent assembly line.

Even from where he was he could see a red star on the side of the cases as the men passed them in the light up to the truck.

Red star. That meant only one thing, and then a lot of things fell into place in his mind. Not black market. Far worse. Arms for the Communist insurgents. Brought in clandestinely at the pier, rebuilt for no other reason in this lonely place. Stored in this bodega, shipped out stealthily, at night. That explained why the guard had shot so quickly. It explained the silence, the absence of people, the threatening temper of the Senator's assistant. Senator Arias? This wasn't going on without his knowledge.

He thought suddenly of something else. President Orosa, she had said, coming on Friday. Would it be just the usual politician's weekend, with this going on unknown in the background? Or was there something else planned? How did it tie up? Impossible to tell. But he had to get out of here, now, get in touch with the Department of Defense, tell them where the arms were coming from that Huks were using against soldiers all over the country.

He thought a moment of Senator Arias and his immense power and influence. So it was not enough. He wanted absolute power and this was the way he was going about getting it. Jess clenched his hands into fists. He wanted to stay in this country the rest of his life, build roads, work hard, live a good life. Not in a country run from Moscow. Not if he could help it. And maybe he could—even the Senator's influence couldn't cover up a warehouse full of arms and ammunition.

More immediate, though, was the fact that he was in serious danger, now. If he were discovered, here, he would be shot without question. If the people at Paco Point realized that he knew as much as he did it would be the same. Even now he might have gone too far there. There could be no waiting until morning. He had to leave, tonight.

Shortly he moved back, desperately aware that any noise might mean the end of him. He stopped. The men had finished loading the truck. A guard unlocked the double gate of the enclosure and it drove off up the road, its lights off, quickly invisi-

ble in the darkness. The men who had been loading stood waiting while the other truck moved into position.

The guards didn't walk the area; they stood at the truck while the men loaded. Here there was nothing to worry about but Huks, and they *were* Huks. Jess began to move again, cautiously, backwards, still watching. He reached the taller growth and turned, moving upward, quickly but silently. On the beach again, on the other side, he began to run, around the bend, past, then down the beach in the shadow of the higher ground above it.

Before he reached the cliff at Paco Point he moved up to the high ground on a gentler incline, avoiding the loose rocks on which he had descended. He darted over the remaining distance to the fence and crouched, waiting. Everything was silent. The grounds of the Villa lay before him, serene and beautiful and still in the moonlight. From where he was he could see the lights of the office. They were still up. Had the Senator come? No time to stop and wonder. Swiftly he swung around the fence post to the other side, darted into the shadow of a shrub, then from shadow to shadow to the cottage, softly up the steps, inside.

He was exhausted, but there was no time to rest. He picked up his kit, moved to the door, then stopped. If they were still up they'd hear the car when he left and know something was wrong to make him go out into the country at night. Better to wait. Here, he thought, he was in no danger for the moment.

He switched off the light, opened the shutter, and stood in the window, waiting. What were they doing? What would they do? Had they realized already that he had left the cottage? Had they been waiting for him to return? He thought again of his car. Should he go now? The guards. The gate at the entrance. Was it locked?

From the driveway suddenly there was the sound of a car. As he listened, it stopped—that was the gate opening. It was coming in. That was the Senator arriving. No going out now, not for a while. He sat down to wait. Half an hour, then out, quickly. Worry about the gate when you get there. Worry about a Huk ambush on the road when it happens. But get out of here, tonight. Get to Mankaro. No telephoning from there, tonight. Everything would be closed. The provincial officials. Wake them up, tell them what was here, forty-seven kilometers away from them, under their noses.

It was hard to breathe with the pressure mounting. Restlessly he got up, paced back and forth in the living room, then into the bedroom. It was hot in here, the wooden shutters were still closed. He moved to one to open it. It was stuck, warped, tight. He

pushed, harder. Not stuck. Bolted. Closed tight, from the outside. Suddenly he heard a slam. The window in the living room. He rushed to it, stood shaking it, pressing his weight against it. It didn't give. It was barred, as tight as the other one. The door—locked. There was not a sound outside. He dashed to the other windows. All closed. He stopped, controlling panic. What did it mean? What did it mean? He stood and waited, forcing himself to keep from rattling desperately at the door, the windows. He tried to think. Had they known he was gone? Were they making sure now that he stayed where he was until morning?

They were not waiting for morning, he realized abruptly. There was a roar, an explosion, a whole side of the room seemed to leap up in flame. Gasoline. Before he could turn, another side. He dashed to the bedroom, to put his whole weight against one of the shuttered windows there, crash it open. Again the roar. The wall burst up in flame in his face, flames on both sides of the wall, rushing up the inside through the bamboo floor.

He stepped back, burned, in the center of an inferno. The woven *sawali* ceiling was beginning to burn. The bathroom. The galvanized iron walls of the bathroom were already hot. He jerked desperately for the wire, missed, jerked again, caught it, stood with the water falling all over him, soaking his clothes. It stopped suddenly. There was no more water. He had used it all in the afternoon. He stood, dazed, the water dripping from his clothes.

He moved out of the narrow trap of the bathroom. The smoke was choking him. He sank down to the floor, put his head down, agonized, to breathe the fresh air between the bamboo strips. Part of the *sawali* ceiling fell away in a shower of sparks, then burst up in flame, still hanging from the rest of the ceiling.

In the light from the flames he could see the ground under the cottage, through the bamboo strips of the floor. He rose, grabbed the small night table by the bed, holding it by its legs, brought it crashing down. It bounced from the resilient bamboo. He brought it down again and again, using all his strength, not noticing the heat, holding his breath against the smoke. The air through the floor was like a damper that swept the flames higher around him.

Finally the floor began to crack. First a few strips, then it was easy to break more, a hole big enough to get through. He crouched on the ground under the cottage for a moment, then dashed out, heedless of a burning strip that fell on him, just running, anywhere, away from the fire.

The car. Where was the car? He stopped short to look around, then dashed for it. He opened the

door and fell onto the seat, gasping, breathless. When he could he sat up and looked back at the cottage. As he looked, studs gave way and part of the roof crashed in. The flames swept up over everything.

They had intended to burn him alive. There was no time to wait, to think about that. Soon they would be out again. He fumbled for the car key, tried to put it in the ignition lock. He realized his hands were shaking, so badly that the key danced around the opening without going in. He tried to force his hand steady. He couldn't. He brought all his will to bear. Finally the key went in. Now the starter, then a dash for it.

He pushed the starter button on the dash board, automatically pressing the accelerator, tensing for the start, his whole mind on getting away. Nothing happened.

There was no sound from the starter. He pressed again and again, hardly realizing what he was doing. The starter was dead, absolutely dead. Feverishly he twisted the key, off, then on again. Still there was not a sound from the starter. Was it the wrong key? He took it out. It couldn't have been or it wouldn't have turned the lock. He sat, unable to think what to do next.

Run for it then. On foot. He opened the door, started to get out.

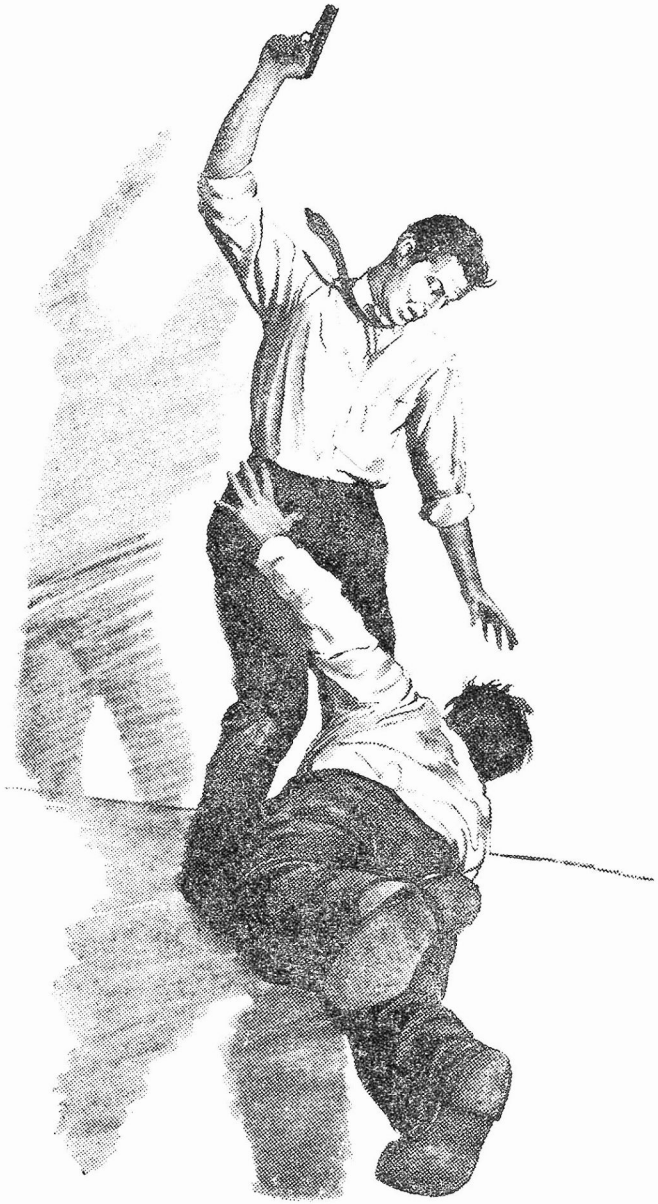
He heard a voice say, "It won't work without the battery." Lopez stepped up, holding a .45. Behind him was Bautista, with another .45. "Get out," Lopez said. Jess didn't move. Lopez grabbed him by the shoulder. "Get out, I said," he barked. "You wanted to be the Senator's guest. Now you're going to be."

Jess looked at the two men, their .45's. There was nothing to do but get out, play for time, but there wouldn't be much time. "Up to the Villa," Lopez said. He walked ahead of them, up across the veranda, into the dark sala. Lopez pressed the .45 in his back. "Watch it," he said.

They went on to the office. Several people were there, the Senator's secretary, Cruz, two other men, the Senator. Senator Arias sat at his desk in a white sharkskin suit, bloated with fat. He looked monstrously evil, incredibly obscene, his eyes small and unfeeling, his dark face overpoweringly arrogant. He looked like the product of all the scandals he had been involved in, all the corruption he had fattened on in his years in politics. He was loathsome.

Senator Arias was not with the Huks because he believed in their cause. Probably he had never believed in a cause in his life. He would bend the cause to his own ends, take the force behind it, use it and the help of any outside source, to put himself on top. He drummed his gross fingers impatiently on the desk top. "Why did you bring him here?" he said irritably.

"We thought you wanted him,



sir," Lopez said.

The Senator looked at him. "I said 'Get him,' not 'Bring him,' you fool." He stared malevolently at Butler. "I don't know what you wanted here," he said, "but you're causing us a great deal of trouble."

"I'm sorry I inconvenienced you by getting out of the cottage before you managed to burn it down," Jess began.

"Yes, that would have been an unfortunate accident." He seemed bored, so far beyond being sure, so absolutely knowing that his will would prevail. Jess felt his skin crawl. The very voice set his teeth on edge. He looked around the room at the people gazing respectfully at Senator Arias. He said, "You can't get away with this. People know I'm here. They'll be here to see what happened."

"You came to stay a week, you told Miss Santos. No one will look for you before then. If they do it will pass as an accident, until Friday at least. By Friday it will be too late."

"Friday?"

"Friday there'll be a new government in this country, and no one will wonder about you or any other American."

"President Orosa! You wouldn't dare! You couldn't. The Secret Service men will be here before then. Do you think they won't find those arms in the bodega, that ammunition that Russia sent you to kill your own people?"

"You saw that, didn't you? The bodega will be empty when the Secret Service men go through it. Tonight trucks are carrying off the guns and ammunition. Perhaps you saw that too. Of course it will be filled again this week, when another shipload arrives, but the Secret Service won't see that."

"You rotten son-of-a-bitch," Jess spat at him. "Your own people won't let you get away with it."

The Senator looked at him as if he were a fly about to be crushed. "The people," he said contemptuously. "The people will follow the winning side." He stood up, with difficulty, his great body heavy on him. All of the others seemed to stand straighter, more at attention, looking at the Senator, waiting respectfully for him to give his orders. Jess looked at them, around the room, Rita Santos, Bautista, the other two men, Cruz, himself, Lopez. In the small room they stood close, around the Senator's desk.

The Senator was going to give instructions for another accident. This time, he knew, there would be no mistake. There was no way out of this, but one desperate chance. He looked out of the side of his eye at Lopez, his gun at his side for the moment, then at Cruz, not looking at him but at the Senator. He had to take the chance.

Senator Arias was saying, "Get one of the small boats . . ." Jess moved suddenly, brought his big fist down on Lopez's hand. As the pistol fell, clattering to the floor, he whirled and dived against Cruz.

A shot rang out, wild. Another shot. He felt a stab of pain in his side. The room was in an uproar. Desperately he reached for the gun Lopez had dropped. Lopez grabbed at it and their hands went up together, grappling for it. It fired. Across the room the girl screamed. He heard her fall. They seemed to stop for a moment to look at her. In the instant of confusion Jess burst out of the room, around the counter, through the darkness of the sala. He heard the Senator scream, "Get him." Shots came thick, but wide in the darkness. The others had guns, too. He could hear their feet on the polished floor behind him. He still had the pistol, but he couldn't stop to fire back.

The jeep. If it's been converted so that it needs a key— He was there before he could think of that. Now he was a target against the moonlight. A shot went crashing through the windshield. Another. He chanced a shot back. The jeep didn't need a key. He flipped the switch. It started swiftly. The gate now, the gate. He crouched down, building up speed. There were two guards in front of the gate waving their rifles. There was no stopping for them. They stepped aside at the last minute and he went crashing through the light gate, carrying part of it with him.

No time to look back, to see what they were doing. The guards began to fire. How could they have designed an army vehicle with as little protection as this? How could they miss? He crouched, built up the speed as fast as it would go, sixty, sixty-five, skidded wildly around a curve in the loose, sandy road.

He raised up. He was out of sight of the rifles now, but it would be only a moment until they followed in the car. His whole side was wet from blood. No stopping for that, either, no matter how much it bled. He gripped the steering wheel until his fingers hurt, gritting his teeth to keep from crying out.

The jeep had the advantage of taking the road better, but the car had the speed. He could look back now and see them gaining on him. Desperately he pressed the accelerator to the floor. There was no more speed from the jeep. He screamed around another curve and the car was out of sight again. Where could he run if he stopped? The countryside was clear, little flat squares of grass that had once been rice paddies.

In the distance he could see trees bordering the stream. Could he make that? If he stopped now could he make that? Too late. The other car was pulling up now, its headlights were already on him. Not shooting yet, waiting to pull up.

He crouched as low as he could get and still see. Holding the steering wheel in his left hand he moved over to the other seat. Gradually he allowed the jeep to slow down. The car was almost on

him. He put one foot outside, on the small step.

The other car was just behind him, in the other lane, about to pull up alongside. What were they going to do? Why didn't they shoot? He put his other foot out. He'd never know. He twisted the steering wheel suddenly, sharply, left, let go, braced, rose, jumped clear.

He landed on the bank by the road where the earth was still soft from the rains. Behind him there was the horrible noise of the car meeting the jeep, carrying it on ahead of it, yards, before it stopped.

As he watched, fascinated, the wreckage burst into flames. Viciously he hoped that if anyone burned it would be the ones who had set fire to his cottage. Then he scrambled up the bank into the fields. There had been three cars at the Villa. There might be another one after him. From the higher ground he could see it, not half a kilometer away now.

There was no time to stop and think. On the open field in the moonlight he was a clear target. The field rose and fell in the square pattern of its former rice paddies, one a foot higher, one a foot lower than the next one. There was no place to hide. The other car was bearing down. He had to get to the trees, at the stream.

He set out as fast as he could go, forcing himself to hurry. It was difficult to run on the rough ground. He stumbled and almost fell at the edge of a terrace square. No running now, anyway; when he looked back the other car had arrived, stopped at the wreckage. How long before they would swarm all over the fields, hunt him down? The terrace dikes rose a little around each terrace; in the moonlight they cast shadows on the terrace below. He dropped to his hands and knees to crawl along in the shadow, but quickly, quickly. Now over one dike to the terrace above, briefly in the moonlight, then in the shadow again.

The land began to rise; if it fell away again behind he could stand then, run, hidden by the rise until he was almost to the river. Near the road there was a shot. They must have thought they'd spotted him. They were coming already.

He was at the top of the rise. The next terrace was lower, then lower. Now stand, run. How far were the trees? He didn't know. He couldn't even see the trees, but he had to run, stumble, run again. Silently; sound carries in the night stillness, as the sound of their movement was carrying, closer.

Now it was level. This had been a big, flat terrace in the river basin, once. The grass here was taller, and sharp; it cut his fingers and tore at his clothes, but what did it matter?

Now the trees, finally. He leaned against one, exhausted. If they came, let them. But no far-

ther, now.

In the distance he could hear them. They had reached the top of the rise. Soon they would be coming toward the stream; it was the obvious goal. Wearily he rose, stepped to the bank, then into the water. It was still, shallow water, barely beyond his knees. He paused a moment to rinse off his face, then walked across, slowly, to the other side, and out.

He forced himself to run, then, dodging the trees, following the meandering stream. He tried to remember when it reached the road. Where was the small bridge he had crossed? Would it be far enough ahead to leave the stream, get back on the road to make better time?

Would they think of that? Would they send a car on ahead, to pick him up when he got back on the road? What else might he meet in this country where bandits roamed at night? His whole side was aflame from the pain of the wound. He was staggering. He took off his shirt, walked back into the water and splashed stiffly against the wound. It was not deep, a grooved furrow on the side, but painful. In the distance he heard a shot again, but farther away. He took out his handkerchief and held it against the wound, then walked back to the bank and sank down, back against a tree. He could go no farther.

TUESDAY, JUNE 18

He rose, stiff and painful, as soon as the sun was up. He had no idea how far he had come in the night. He crossed to the other side of the stream and looked out, but there was no sign of the road, no way of telling how far he was from it now. He looked down at himself. He had bled until his whole side was bloody. Gingerly he took off his shirt, then his pants, to rinse out the worst of it in the stream. He watched as the blood briefly colored the water, then vanished.

When most of the blood was out he put the clothes back on without waiting for them to dry. The sun was hot already and they would dry as he walked. He walked quickly, forcing his mind away from the night at Paco Point, onto the day ahead. If he could reach the cultivated area, probably he could find a jeepney, or if nothing else a cart to take him into Mankaro. First a doctor, to tape up his side, then the provincial officials. Let them take care of Paco Point, and that would be the last of Senator Arias. He clenched his fists as he thought of Senator Arias and the trap he had set for the President and the country. Burns and a side wound were not too much to pay for stopping that.

Ahead now he could see plowed rice paddies, water standing in

them, some already planted and showing faintly green. Before he reached that, he thought, he had better strike out across dry ground to the road.

The road was hot and dusty when he reached it. There was no one working in this area, no transportation but his own feet. He had walked half an hour before there were any signs of life. Then he could see the familiar planters, a dozen of them in one large paddy, more in others, bending over, planting rice, one by one. They straightened up as he approached. One said, "Hello, Joe. Where are you going?"

Jess said, "How far to Mankaro?" but the man didn't understand. Haltingly he tried, *"Makakanong kilometres ba hangang Mankaro?"* in Tagalog.

It wasn't the dialect of the province, but the man understood. The others laughed uproariously at an *Americano* trying to speak to them in their language. *"Vingte-uno kilometres,"* the man said.

Twenty-one kilometres. A long way to go yet. He waved and said, "Thank you," and started on. Now there began to be more people, and, here and there, isolated bamboo houses set, surrounded by trees and bamboo thickets, on small dry islands amidst the rice paddies.

There was a jeepney, finally, a small passenger bus converted from an army jeep. Its driver was lolling lazily in it, talking cheerfully to a girl from the fields. She looked inquisitively at Jess as he came up, then giggled and ran back to the field.

The driver had seen the pistol sticking out of the top of his pants. "Whatsa matter with you, Joe?" he said. "You get shot?"

"Never mind what's the matter with me," Jess said roughly. "Are you going to Mankaro?"

"You like to go to Mankaro?"

"Yes," Jess said impatiently. "What do you think I'm asking you for? Can you drive me there?"

The driver looked at him insolently. "Sure, Joe," he said. "Ten pesos?"

It was a trip worth a peso at most, but that was on other days. Now it was worth anything to Jess to get to Mankaro. "Come on," he said. "Let's go."

The driver moved deliberately back to his seat, picking his gold teeth with a straw. Jess had to hold himself to keep from shouting at the man. Finally he threw away the straw and they started off. He turned around and looked at Jess. "Where you come from, Joe?" he asked.

"Never mind," Jess said. "Look at the road. You want to get us both killed?"

The driver turned ahead again. "You have trouble, maybe?" he persisted.

"Just an accident," Jess said. "You know any doctor in Mankaro?"

"Sure. Plenty doctors in Mankaro."

"Well, take me to one, then,

and stop worrying about what happened to me."

Barely inside Mankaro they drew up in front of an old fashioned Filipino style house, high and awkward looking, its living quarters upstairs where they would be cool, the ground floor enclosed, used only for storage. Two enormous acacia trees spread their branches over and about the house. From the hot, dusty road it seemed cool and remote.

The driver pointed at the house. "Dr. Desbarro," he said. He eyed Jess speculatively. "I'll wait for you?" he asked hopefully.

"No," Jess said. "Here's your ten pesos." He got out and the driver made a U-turn in the street and drove off in the direction they had come from. I hope that ten pesos helps you with your girl friend, Jess thought. He turned and opened the gate and walked up to the house.

He went up the stairs to the porch and knocked at the door. From the back of the house he could hear voices; no one came. He looked in. The room was dim and empty. He knocked again, louder. This time a woman appeared from the back, hitching up her skirts. Her face was angular and hard. She looked at him suspiciously. "What do you want?" she said.

He felt a sudden anger rise in him. Why did people keep asking him "What do you want? Where

are you going?" Surely it was obvious from the looks of him what he wanted at a doctor's house. Suddenly he wondered, had the driver brought him to another place? Was this not a doctor's house at all, was it a trap of some kind? The Huk organization was wide. Had he known somehow? Instinctively Jess stepped back, looked around, ready to run.

From inside he heard a man's voice call, "Aning, Aning!" and then a jabber of the Quinteriano dialect. The woman turned to answer. He could hear the word, *"Americano."*

An elderly Filipino came out. He said politely, "What can I do for you?"

Jess forced himself to stop, to say, evenly, "Are you Dr. Desbarro? I've been hurt. I need a doctor."

The woman frowned. The man said quickly, "Yes, come in. I'm Dr. Desbarro." Jess hesitated, then walked into the dim room. The man led the way into a small office. He was crisply efficient now. "Take off your shirt, please," he told Jess. He examined the wound quickly. "It's nothing," he said. "How did you get it?"

"An accident," Jess said briefly, impatient for the doctor to be finished. He looked apprehensively out of the window. Would the Senator's men still be after him? Would they ask the workers along the road until they found those who had seen him, found the driver who had brought him here? "Hurry, doctor," he said.

The doctor was preparing the bandage. "I'm sorry I don't have all the modern drugs," he said apologetically. "Very hard to get, here."

"That's all right," Jess told him impatiently. "Just tape it up." In spite of himself he had to look out the window again, see if anyone was coming.

The old man was watching him. "Did you run into bandits? Is someone after you?"

"Yes, bandits," Jess said. "Out there." When would he be able to be in a house again without being afraid, without wondering, listening, waiting? The Senator had said that the people would follow the winning side. How could you tell which ones had already chosen that side as the winner?

"I have a son in States," the doctor said unexpectedly. "In New York, studying to be a doctor also," he went on proudly.

Jess had to force himself to make conversation. "Is that so? Is he coming back here to practice with you?" He reached for his shirt.

"Wait," the doctor said. "You are burned, also, no?"

"Never mind."

"I'll just put some salve on it. Just a minute. No, Pablo won't come back here," he laughed, as he spread the salve. "Not fancy enough for him. Already he has big ideas of a clinic in Manila!" His face struggled between pride and laughter. "Why not wash up

first? There is soap, and a towel."

"Thanks, doctor, I really do need it."

Dr. Desbarro said quietly, "I'll have to report the fact that I've treated a wounded man."

"Go right ahead," Jess told him. "I've got a pretty full report to make myself."

"Yes," the doctor said quickly. "You're going to Manila? You can report it as soon as you get there."

Jess turned and looked at him. "I'm not waiting until I get to Manila. I'm going straight to the provincial authorities as soon as I leave here."

The doctor opened his mouth as though he wanted to say something, then stopped. He turned and began to clear the table. "I like Americans. I've always wanted to go to the States myself. You know, I always wanted to see it snow. Is it really like that, white all over?"

Jess put his shirt back on. "You wouldn't like it," he said absently. "It's really white all over, but cold and wet, too."

"That's what Pablo says."

"How much do I owe you, doctor?"

Dr. Desbarro put up his hand. "That's all right. It's nothing."

"Wait a minute, doctor, I want to pay."

The doctor shook his head. "I like Americans," he said again. "In the liberation, when the soldiers were coming through, there used to be plenty, plenty here at the house all the time."

"I remember how it was. I had a lot of Filipino friends then, too," Jess said. "Still have, in spite of this." He and the doctor went out into the other room. "Well, thanks, anyway."

"It's after twelve," the doctor said. "Did you eat yet? Why not stay and eat with us?"

He looked at the doctor. Every minute he waited the Senator's men could be closer. Was that what the doctor had in mind? Did he know? "Thanks. I'd better go."

"Why not stay?" the doctor insisted. "If you're going to the provincial capitol, no one will be there until two o'clock."

That was true, and in the small town of Mankaro there was no place to hide, no place where they couldn't find him just as easily as at Dr. Desbarro's. "All right," he said.

"I'll just tell my wife." Dr. Desbarro went out to the back. Jess could hear her angry voice rise, and then the doctor's, cutting sharply through it. I'd better go, he thought. What does it mean? Why is she so angry? Why is the doctor so anxious for me to stay? I can find out where the authorities live, that shouldn't be hard here, get them at home. Let them lose their siesta for once. I've lost enough sleep already.

Dr. Desbarro came back with an apologetic little smile. "Do you understand our dialect?" he asked. Jess shook his head. "My wife is embarrassed to have an American guest on such short notice. She

would want it to be a fine dinner."

"Look, I'd better not stay. I don't want to put you out." He stood up to go.

"Oh, it's all right," the doctor insisted. "Please stay. She's preparing it already."

There was no real reason to expect anything to be wrong, Jess told himself. Why should he suspect the driver, the doctor? Surely the Huks wouldn't try anything in broad daylight in Mankaro. "All right," he said again, and sat down.

The doctor's wife sat silently, frowning, through the meal, speaking only once in a while, sharply, in dialect, to the barefooted servant. Jess was preoccupied, unable to shake off the worry, the fear that any moment cars would drive up, men would get out, he'd be surrounded again.

The old doctor rambled on pleasantly. "How long have you been here?" he asked.

"In the Philippines? Ever since the war. I used to work for Warren & Co. in Manila. Then I went on my own, construction business."

"Ah, construction business? Do you like it here?"

Jess managed to laugh. "Yes. Most of the time—when they're not shooting at me."

Dr. Desbarro said sadly, "It's not like it used to be, before the war. So many things now—" He looked bewildered. "I don't understand it," he finished weakly.

They sat silently, then. Jess shook his head when the servant brought in bananas. He felt unable to eat any more. He stood and said, "I'd better go. It's almost two." The doctor's wife rose abruptly and left the room. "Thanks very much," he told the doctor. "Please let me pay you, at least for the medicine and bandages."

"It's nothing," the doctor followed Jess to the door. "You people helped us so much, and there's so little we can do to repay." They shook hands firmly. "Be careful. I—" He seemed to want to say something more, but he didn't continue. "Come back some time and visit us," he said finally. "Any time you're passing through."

Jess turned to go. From behind he heard the woman's voice say, "Wait." He turned and she stood stiffly, holding out a loud colored Hawaiian shirt. "Your shirt's ruined," she said harshly. "You'd better wear this." She handed it to him and turned and left quickly.

"Yes, put it on. Your shirt is ruined," the doctor said. "I guess this is all my wife could find big enough for you. A weakness of mine, these loud shirts. Not very appropriate for a doctor, is it?" Then, putting a hand on Jess' shoulder, he said, "My wife likes the Americans too. But she's afraid. Goodbye, and be careful." He closed the door quickly, leaving Jess standing alone on the porch.

The Huks were ruthless, and

the life of any person helping someone they were after would be worthless, Jess knew. Was that what the doctor meant? Did he realize the situation Jess was in? Quickly he stripped off his bloody torn shirt and put on the other one. He took the pistol out of the top of his pants and put it in his pocket, but it was too big and hung heavily there. He put it back in his waist; he'd turn it in at the provincial Fiscal's office.

The air was heavy and thick with humidity now. It was overpoweringly hot and the sweat trickled down over his face and body as he walked along the road to the town plaza. It was quiet and sleepy there, with no traffic moving at all. The policeman's platform was empty. On Jess' side of the plaza in the shade jeepneys were parked in front of a soft drink stand, some of their drivers asleep, others talking languidly with a waitress. There were three or four cars, some in the shade, some parked in the sun, their windows rolled up, looking unbearably hot.

Jess looked around the plaza quickly, anxious to get on with his business, then get his car as soon as possible and get away from here forever. On the south side of the plaza he could see the provincial building, wooden like all the others around the plaza, and little more impressive. It stood in the sun, somnolent and shabby looking.

He hated to think of stepping out into that sun, but it was no cooler in the shade, really. He walked slowly down the sidewalk past the cold drink stand. It was hot and empty, with only the jeepney drivers leaning indifferently against the wall outside. The waitress stood in the doorway; she smiled hopefully at Jess but he smiled back and shook his head and went on. She and the restaurant were no more inviting than the sidewalk and dusty cars of the plaza.

He wondered briefly if anyone would be in the Fiscal's office yet. In the heat he wouldn't blame them for taking an extra long siesta. There was a car in front of the building, though, and another near the corner on his side, in the last of the shade. Probably those were the provincial officials' cars.

He stepped into the street at the corner to cross to the government building, then drew back quickly. The car there in the side street—why did it look familiar? Cautiously he peered around the corner at it, then jerked his head back, his heart beating faster. The man sitting in the driver's seat was Lopez.

They were waiting for him. They must have known he'd head straight for the Fiscal's office, walk down this sidewalk, cross this street. The other two cars on the plaza, were they theirs too? He couldn't tell. He had stopped breathing. Had Lopez seen him? He stepped back, looking in panic around the plaza. It was broad

and empty. There was no place to hide in it. He thought of the jeepneys. That wouldn't work. He'd been outraced in a jeep already. He brought his hand up, under his shirt front, to the handle of the pistol. How many of them were there? What chance would he have with that?

He was backing along the street. He turned. With the sports shirt on his back he wouldn't be so recognizable—for a moment. The drivers were looking curiously at him. The waitress giggled, not understanding what was going on. He walked quickly up to the restaurant, inside.

She made a face at one of the drivers, turned, followed him in. "Anything, Joe?" she said.

"Beer."

She brought the beer, tepid, with ice in a glass. He didn't look at it. There was no time to drink it. Lopez was not a hundred yards away. He might have seen him, be coming now. How many others were there? Jess hadn't seen. The waitress wanted to talk. She stood at the table waiting for him to sit down. He put fifty centavos on the table, for the beer. "Where's the men's room?" he said.

She tossed her head and pointed sullenly to the back. He pushed a dirty curtain aside, went out, through the kitchen, outside. If it was what he thought it would be—it was, open space, the toilet a small smelly outhouse across. He ignored it, turned left past the next building, the next. If he could get around behind, cross the street without them seeing him, go in the back of the government building, upstairs to the Fiscal's office, tell them what waited below, what went on at Paco Point.

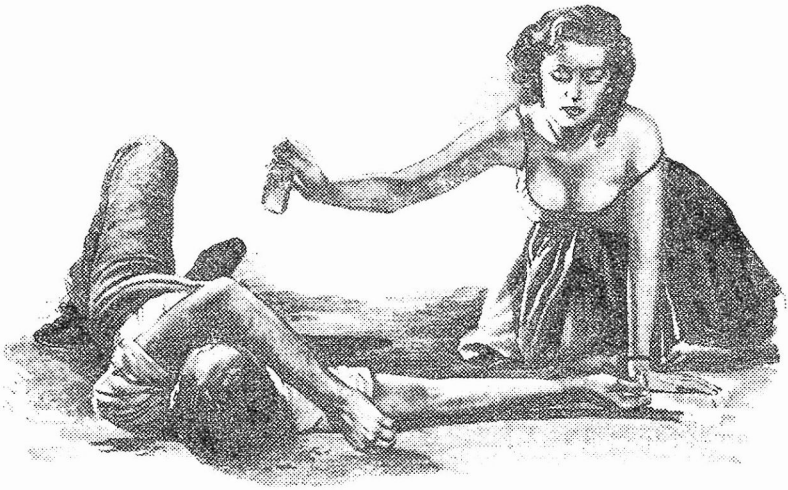
He was behind the last building in the block now. He took out the pistol, held it in his hand, looked out cautiously, up the street. The car with Lopez was still there. The other car stood hot and empty in front of the government building. Had there been anybody in it? Where were they now? Had they gotten out, were they waiting, here, there, in that corner? Or was it the Fiscal's car, not connected with Senator Arias at all? He couldn't tell.

The street was narrow. He stepped quickly across it, head down, turned into an alley that ran to the back. He put the pistol away again. It was hard to tell which of these was the government building; they all looked the same from the back. Quickly, quietly he walked up. A kitchen, a store room, then an office, a man typing slowly.

He stepped inside. "Where's the Fiscal's office?" he asked.

The man jumped, surprised. "Upstairs," he said.

He ran quickly past other clerks to the wooden stairs, around, up to the second floor. He had made it, finally. He stood at the head of the steps a moment to catch his breath. There was a clerk reading a comic book at a desk there. Jess



said, "Is the Fiscal in?"

The clerk put the comic book down reluctantly. He said, "Just a minute. Just wait." Then he opened the door and went into the office. In a minute he came out and closed the door behind him. "Just wait," he said again. "The Fiscal will be coming." Then he went on down the steps.

Jess drummed impatiently on the desk top. Finally the door opened again and a slim, dark man came out. He went to the head of the steps and looked down. Then he turned to Jess and said, "Anything I can do for you?"

Jess began, "There certainly is. Plenty." The man looked again down the steps. "Pay attention," Jess said impatiently. "This is important. Can't we go into your office?"

The man said quickly, "Yes. Go in. Go ahead. I'll be coming."

Suddenly Jess knew what he was waiting for, what the clerk had gone down stairs for. The Fiscal was in with Senator Arias. He had sent for the men, told them he was here. He looked again. Downstairs the door burst open. Lopez, Bautista, others, no telling how many.

Jess grabbed his gun. The Fiscal made a rush for him. He knocked him out of the way, fired down the steps. Shots rang out from them as they rushed up. He ducked. There were too many of them. The Fiscal was on him again. He gave a lunge. The man went hurtling down the narrow steps. Jess turned to run. Into the office. Close the door. Now where? The window at the back. They were already at the door. He was up and out the window, down to

the ground with a jar. He ran across the open space. They were at the window, firing. A bullet hit the wooden wall beside him with a crashing, tearing sound.

Any moment they would be down, after him. The kitchen he had passed before—he burst into it. There was a startled old woman, cooking rice over a wood fire. He started to run through the building, out to the plaza. He stopped. There was no place to go in the plaza. There would be more, waiting for him there.

Cautiously he looked out. They were taking the time to come down the stairs, not out the window. Time enough for him to cross, reach the alley, the street, wonder then where to go next. Before they were out of the building he was in the alley. Then down to the street, across the street without looking, up behind the buildings again. He thought irrelevantly of his beer waiting for him on the table as he passed the back of the Golden Lotus Cafe. Someday I'll come and have a beer with you, he thought. Some day.

There was a dead end here. The last building went all the way back to the building behind it that faced on the other street. He was holed up in here, stopped, a target for them when they came. He looked around, desperately. There was no other way but through the buildings. The back door was open. He rushed in, past a Chinese asleep, ahead, through a store, past a Chinese woman wrapping noodles, out onto the sidewalk, left, around the corner again.

Breathing was so hard that it tore his throat. He had to stop, lean against a wall, gasp. Any minute now they'd be out, all over the plaza, the streets. He thought of the doctor. The doctor'd said he liked Americans. Here was his chance to prove it. He began to run again, down the street, from doorway to doorway, turned into another block, down, then over again, back, so as to come up to the house from the rear.

This time he raced up the back steps, burst into the kitchen. "What do you want?" the old woman said again, but there was real fear on her face this time.

"Where is Dr. Desbarro?" She pointed toward the front of the house and he went on in.

Dr. Desbarro looked up in alarm when Jess burst in. "What's the matter? What's happened?"

It was a moment before Jess could answer. When he had caught his breath he said, "The Huks—they were there, in the Fiscal's office. I managed to get away, but they're after me."

Consternation showed in the doctor's face. "Did they see you come here?"

"I don't think so."

The doctor rose hastily and closed the shutters of the window. "Why are they after you?"

"I didn't tell you how I hap-

pened to get the wound. I don't know if you guessed. You knew there was someone after me, that I was being hunted, that that's why I was going to the Fiscal's office, didn't you?" Dr. Desbarro nodded. "Last night I was at Paco Point. I found out I wasn't supposed to be there. Nobody outside is, except on invitation." The doctor looked puzzled. Jess looked up. Mrs. Desbarro was in the doorway, listening, her face angular and hard and unrevealing. He went on, "Near there there's a bodega. I got close enough to see what it had in it—arms and ammunition. Russian. You could see the star on the cases. It's a distribution center. That's where the Huks' arms are coming from."

Dr. Desbarro's voice was incredulous. "But that property belongs to Senator Arias. Everybody knows that."

"Sure it belongs to Senator Arias. He's behind it all."

The doctor rose. "That's ridiculous," he said heatedly. "You're making it up."

Jess was suddenly, unreasonably, furious. "Do you think I'm making up these burns? They tried to burn me alive in one of the cottages last night, because they thought I knew too much. Do you think I'm making up this wound? Did I shoot myself? I got that getting away from Paco Point last night. I've run over half of Quinteros province with them after me. When I went to the Fiscal's office Senator Arias' men were there waiting for me. He set a trap for me."

Dr. Desbarro sat down, wearily. "I was afraid of that," he said slowly. "I wanted to warn you, but I didn't know. The provincial authorities here support the Huks —they say. Maybe they have to." He shrugged helplessly. "I didn't know what had happened to you. I thought an American—I thought they wouldn't dare." He looked at Jess. "We have much to fear here. Reprisals, retaliation. No one goes against the Huks."

Jess knew it would be like this all over the province, and half a dozen more provinces. Not support of the Huks, or sympathy with them, necessarily, but fear of opposing them. He said, "You said you liked Americans. I had no place else to come."

"You can't stay here," the doctor's wife said, harshly, from the doorway. "They'll be here. They'll find you, and us too."

"Quiet, Aning," Dr. Desbarro told her.

"No, she's right," Jess said. "I shouldn't have come." He stood up.

Dr. Desbarro said, "Wait. Did anyone see you come here? What will you do now?"

"I don't think so. But if they're in with the authorities, they're bound to find me. I have to get out of Mankaro, get to other authorities who aren't dominated by Senator Arias. This is Tuesday. There isn't much time left."

"Time?" the doctor asked.

"On Friday President Orosa's coming."

"Yes, he's going to dedicate the new market."

"And he's going to be the guest of Senator Arias at Paco Point."

"You mean—"

Jess nodded. "Arias bragged about it. He said on Friday there'll be a new government."

Dr. Desbarro toyed restlessly with a pencil on his desk. "I don't believe it. I can't—"

The woman spoke from the doorway again. "Yes, it will happen. And we'll have to answer for you, maybe before then. You can't stay here. Go away. We can't help you."

"I'm sorry," the doctor said.

"I know," Jess told him. He turned toward the doorway.

The doctor followed him out into the other room. "How will you get away? Where will you go now?"

"If I could telephone, get the authorities at San Angelo, or better, at Manila."

The doctor shook his head. "No telephone in Mankaro. They never have got them back since the war."

Jess shrugged helplessly. "Wait until dark then, try to get out of town. But how can I get out? Some of them are bound to be there in the plaza, where I'd catch a jeep or a bus. I'll figure that out before then, I guess."

"There's a train," the doctor said. "If you could get there without being seen. It comes through here at 4:40. You'd be in Manila in seven hours."

"That's it, that's the best way." Jess looked at his watch. "That's about an hour and a half. How far to the station?"

"On the other side of town, but not very far. You'll have to go around by the back streets—about twenty minutes. You'd better leave here about 4:15."

"Wait here?"

"Not here," the woman said loudly. He realized that he and the doctor had been almost whispering.

"Where else can you go?" the doctor said. "Stand in the railroad station for an hour and a half? Dowstairs in the store room. It's not for very long." He motioned Jess back and opened a window and looked out. "At the back. Come on." They went swiftly through the house to the back porch. "Here is the key to the lock," the doctor said. "Don't worry. It's all right."

The ground floor of the house was built of lattice, crossing diagonally, painted green. Inside it was dim, but easy enough to see out on every side. Easy enough to see in, too, if you were fairly close, Jess realized. There was no floor, but on one side a wooden platform had been built and on it sat two enormous woven baskets for storing rice. He went and sat between them, covered from the front and rear.

It was hard to sit and do noth-

ing, wondering where the men were, if they would be coming. Involuntarily he got up to walk back and forth in the cluttered disorder of the dark storeroom.

There was the noise of a car in the street. Now—were they coming? He stood transfixed, unable to move, either to hide behind the baskets or to the door, out and away.

It was only a jeepney. It passed the house and the sound died away in the distance. But how could you tell how they would come? Maybe they would come in jeepneys, and stop, here. Maybe they had separated and were scouring the streets now, one by one. They couldn't afford to let him get away, now. They had to get him, and everything was on their side.

Above him he could hear the loud angry voice of the doctor's wife, speaking heatedly in the Quinteriano dialect. She was afraid. What would she do? Even if she did like Americans, would she decide that the best way to live, to be sure of living, was to turn this one over to them? Why not? Almost anyone would.

He sat down again between the baskets. Half an hour more. It passed, agonizingly slowly, with every sound a warning, every movement outside a report that they were approaching. Finally he heard steps down the back stairs, a tap at the door. He rushed to the door. It was the doctor. "You'd better go now," he said. "I don't know if the train will be on time. There's no way of finding out. You'd better go that way," he pointed. "Go as far as Magallanes Street, then turn left, go all the way across, to the other side of town. It's not so far. You'll see the tracks crossing Magallanes. About a block up from there, that's the railroad station. Be careful."

"I'll never be able to thank you, doctor."

"It doesn't matter. Hurry, now." As Jess stepped through the doorway, he said again, "Come back some time and visit us. When things are different." He turned and went on up the steps into the house.

Twenty minutes. There was no time to wait. He strode quickly through the big back yard, past the chicken house, a pig grunting softly, through the gate, out onto the street behind. Now for the worst. It was impossible to be inconspicuous, a big American walking alone on this quiet back street. He held his head down, the collar of his shirt up about his chin, but there was no hiding. It was hard to keep from running, but he mustn't run. That would make him stand out worse than ever. He had black hair; he could be a Spaniard, walking along. He knew he didn't look like a Spaniard, though—and they'd seen the loud polo shirt; it would be a target, a good target.

He reached Magallanes Street. There was tall cogon grass grow-

ing in the corner; he stepped back into it and looked out, both ways, up and down Magallanes Street. It was deserted. He looked back, then turned into it, a dusty, unpaved, winding street.

At the intersection ahead a car, like the one Lopez had been sitting in, crossed suddenly, heading toward the plaza. He almost fell getting back into the grass alongside the road. There was a gate in the bamboo fence behind him. He fumbled it open and stepped inside, his heart pounding. He couldn't tell if it was one of their cars, or if they'd seen him. He stood, waiting. Maybe not. The car wasn't coming back. He heard a shrill, angry woman's voice from the house behind him. It was a fat old woman, her cheeks bouncing, gesticulating furiously and jabbering in Quinteriano. He forced himself to smile and wave, as though it were perfectly ordinary to step through someone's gate and hide behind the fence. She continued to rage as he opened the gate again and stepped back onto the road.

When he reached the intersection the car was gone. It might have been anybody. If it was the Senator's men they hadn't seen him. This was one of the streets that led into the plaza. In the distance he could see it, beginning to come to life in the late afternoon. He turned his head away and walked quickly across. It was 4:30 now. He had to hurry.

The railroad was at the very edge of town. Beyond the tracks as they crossed Magallanes Street Jess could see green fields of rice growing. There was a crowd of people around the station, a small shabby concrete building standing beside the track. He couldn't approach it. They might be waiting there for him. A swarm of small boys descended on him, hawking their wares, yelling, "Coconut candy, Joe? Shine, Joe? *Balut,* Joe?" The other people at the station were beginning to look at him. Desperately he reached in his pocket, pulled out all the change he had, threw it on the ground, away from him.

When the boys swarmed over it he walked back down the street to a lumber yard, through the gate in the wooden fence, into the yard. A young man came up through the stacks of lumber, looking suspiciously at him. "Anything?" he said in a high, unpleasant voice.

"Just stopped in to look around while I'm waiting for the train," Jess said. "Do you think it'll be on time?"

"Sometimes," the man said.

He still had to get the ticket. Sooner or later he'd have to go through the crowd of people, into the station, find out if Lopez, or Cruz, or anyone else was waiting there for him. He looked at the man and thought of another way. "Look, will you do something for me?" he said. "Will you go and buy a ticket to Manila for me?"

"Why?"

Oh, God, why? "Just go and buy the ticket," he said. "I'm not feeling very well." He took out a twenty peso bill. "Hurry up, will you? Here, keep the change."

"You want round trip?"

If you only knew how I hope never to come back here, Jess thought. He said, "Just one way. Go ahead. The train will be coming."

The man took the money and sauntered out through the gate. Jess walked in behind one of the lumber stacks, out of sight in case anyone should come in. It was beginning to rain, a slow drizzle. In the back of the yard was a small shack, built of scrap lumber; it was apparently the office. He hesitated, then walked over to it, out of the rain.

In the distance he could hear the hoarse cough of the diesel locomotive. The train was approaching. Where was the man, why didn't he come back? Maybe he had taken the twenty pesos and disappeared. He ought to have thought of that.

The train was there, stopping at the station. The man hadn't come back with the ticket. At this small station the train wouldn't wait long. He'd have to go, himself, into the station. If they weren't there, he'd buy a ticket. If they were there, waiting—he wouldn't need one.

There was no choice, no other way. He drew his collar up around his chin, ducked his head and went out into the rain. At the gate he stopped to look out at the road, and across, at the station. The man he had sent for the ticket was standing under the shelter of a lean-to cold drink stand next to the station. Jess beckoned furiously. The man pointed out at the rain and shrugged.

The train was beginning to pull out. Maybe the man hadn't even bought the ticket yet. Jess ran across the road to the stand. "The ticket," he said. "Did you get the ticket?"

The man handed it to him. "It's raining," he said. "I didn't want to get wet." Jess snatched it from his hand and ran around the stands to the track. The train was still moving slowly. He jumped on the steps of the last coach, opened the door and went in.

He closed the door behind him and then turned to look back. Goodbye, Mankaro, he thought. I hope I never see you again. Seven hours and then Manila.

The coach was crowded with people, seated three abreast on wooden benches on either side of the narrow aisle. Around them and over them were their bundles, paper suitcases, woven straw mattings, live chickens, one with a small pig. Around one seat several men talked excitedly over a game cock in a wire cage. Vendors were passing up and down the aisle, shouting candy, bananas, boiled sweet potatoes, *balut*. A vendor said to him, "*Balut*, Joe?" and laughed. He shook his head in

disgust at the dirty, cracked egg, the cooked duck embryo the woman was offering him. He pushed through, down the aisle, looking for a seat. People looked up curiously. The smell of the people, the chickens, the *baluts*, the dirt, rose sickeningly in the humid closed air of the coach.

The thought occurred to him that the Senator's men might be on the train, waiting for him. Would they think of that? Maybe not. They wouldn't have seen him at the station, he hadn't bought a ticket; with the stupidity of the man he had sent, it had worked out fine. Still he looked around anxiously. There was no one he recognized. That might not mean anything. The Senator had plenty of men to send. He didn't have to recognize them. They wouldn't have any trouble recognizing him.

He felt for the pistol under his shirt. Suddenly he felt so vulnerable, a target, a big man standing in the middle of these small people. He restrained an impulse to duck, to crouch on the floor of the aisle. There was no need for that. No one was looking at him now. None of the Senator's men was here.

He went on into the next coach. It was the same. There were four coaches. Finally he found a seat in the last coach, before the locomotive. He was safe at last. He sank down wearily onto the wooden seat. An old woman with a black cigarette in her mouth frowned at him and moved a large bundle wrapped in woven fiber out of the way.

The conductor came by and took his ticket. The train was beginning to slow down. It was going to stop again. He sat up in alarm. There'd only been half an hour, why was it stopping?

He caught the conductor's arm and asked, "Why is the train stopping?"

The conductor turned back and said irritably, "Pelayo. Local stops at Pelayo." The local train, he thought impatiently. It would stop a dozen times between Mankaro and Manila. He shook his head; if he'd had time to wait for the express he wouldn't have needed to take a train at all.

He adjusted himself as comfortably as he could on the wooden-stripped bench, leaned back and closed his eyes. As far as he was concerned, it was all over. He was desperately tired. In the heat of the coach, after the running he'd done all night and all day, it was easy to doze in spite of the din of the crowd and the hard, unyielding seats.

The old woman was getting off at the next stop. He roused as she began to gather her bundles together, and shifted his feet into the aisle to let her get out. Outside it was almost dark, the rice fields along the track already indistinguishable in the rain from the sky beyond. He frowned as the woman stumbled over him and dropped one of her parcels. The train stopped and she was

out finally.

He moved into the space she had occupied, next to a boy reading a Tagalog comic book. He sat for a moment looking past the boy through the window at the crowds around the small station. People were getting on. A fat woman with flashing gold teeth pushed a heavy straw suitcase in between the seats and sat down beside him. He glanced at her briefly and closed his eyes again. The train began to pull out.

When he roused again the small bay was buying a *balut* from the vendor, leaning over Jess to pay her. He sat there picking off the shell, raised it to his mouth to drink the liquid, then picked the rest of the shell off and began to eat the hardboiled embryo.

Jess looked away in disgust down the crowded coach. At the end a man was sitting facing him, staring. Jess looked away, and then back. He was a big man for a Filipino. He continued to stare, boldly. Panic began to rise in Jess, uncontrollably.

It meant nothing, Jess told himself. The curiosity Filipinos always have about Americans. He stood up, though, stepped over the woman's suitcase to get into the aisle. She cried out; he had stepped on her foot. He turned to look at the man again, but he wasn't watching now. He was looking out the window into the darkness.

He turned and went into the next coach and then ahead. He would get a seat, or stand, in the last coach. He opened the door of the last coach and stopped. It was as crowded as before. At the end sat Lopez.

Lopez. They were here, on the train now. Lopez hadn't seen him yet. He turned back into the preceding car. He stopped again. The other man had moved up. He sat there, staring at Jess. He didn't move.

He was between them, now. There was no place to go. He looked at the windows. The train was going too fast to jump. He looked wildly for an emergency cord. There was none in sight. He didn't want the train to stop anyway. Not here. Not here in the dark, in the open.

He turned again. Lopez had moved too. He stood behind him now. He felt inexpressibly alone, suddenly, in the midst of all the people. No one else running, or afraid, or in danger. No one noticing what was going on.

The other man spoke sharply to the people on the bench with him. They got up silently and moved away. Lopez nudged him with a pistol. "Sit down," he said. He sat down, between them. They didn't say anything. His mind raced feverishly, searching for a way out. There was none. The two men sat on either side, their arms crossed, pistols underneath, aimed at him.

He wondered how they'd found out. From the man who'd got

the ticket? From the doctor's wife? From the doctor? Had they been waiting at the station in Mankaro, and missed him there, then learned he was on the train after all and raced ahead? There was no way of knowing—no use in knowing, for that matter.

He looked out of the corner of his eye, first at one, then the other. Would they shoot, here, among all these people? They would. They had as much to lose as he had. He shifted uncomfortably, his legs stiff in the narrow space between the wooden seats. They looked at him, frowning.

He wondered what the next town would be. They'd have a car waiting; they wouldn't want trouble on the train, or in the station, if possible. Into the car, then, out on the road, and, finally, in an irrigation ditch somewhere.

There was still the .45 at his waist, under the loud polo shirt. His hand moved slowly under the shirt, up to the pistol. Lopez leaned closer to him, his gun under his arm, so close that the muzzle was touching his shoulder. He moved his hand away.

The train was beginning to slow down. A lot of people were getting off here. They were getting their bundles together, collecting their chickens, standing in the aisles already. He wondered if they were getting off here too. Neither of the men moved. Maybe not. Maybe the others were waiting at another station, farther on.

They waited until all the people had filed out. Then Lopez nudged him. "Come on," he said. He stood aside to let Jess go ahead. The two men followed him down the aisle to the coach door.

They'd made a mistake, waiting. People were waiting to get on, as many as had got off. They poured in now, jostling, scrambling for seats. Lopez and the other man fell back. They were separated. Now was the time to run, through the people. He dashed suddenly. The station platform was jammed. He burst through, knocking people aside. Where were the men? Were they behind him? Would they shoot, in this crowd? No time to wonder about that.

He was running again, breathlessly. Into the station now. There was a woman ahead of him, a large basket on her head. It was too late to stop. He went crashing into her, they went over together, the rice cakes from the basket falling all over the floor. He tried to get up but she caught at his leg. "You pay me, mister, pay me," she cried. He tried to kick loose. Any minute Lopez would be there. He turned on the woman, his face distorted with fury. "Let go of me," he said. "Let go." She fell away in fear at the look on his face.

He was up again now, sliding on the rice cakes, running, people closing in behind him. Out of the station without stopping to look back, into the rain, across the muddy road, up the street.

There were shots now behind him. The Senator's men had reached the road. He could hear them shout, the sound of their feet as they ran across the road, up the street behind him. There were more than two—the ones who'd been waiting to meet them here had joined them. He ran on, stumbling in the darkness.

There was a gate open here. He ran inside it, into the deeper darkness behind the wall. Silently now, in the grass he ran back behind the wall, toward the station, over a wall, into the next yard. Outside he heard the men running past. Any minute now they'd be into the yard he'd just left. He turned away from the wall, ran back, toward the back of the house. There was a wall again, higher this time. Men were coming over the wall in front. He could hear them stop, uncertain where he had gone. He felt the pistol against him as he breathed. He couldn't use it here. There were too many of them. It would just give away where he was, lose the precious minute he had ahead of them.

He pushed his knees up against the wall, pulled himself up to the top, then over and down the other side. There was a dog here. It ran out barking, then jumped for him. He pulled the pistol out quickly. Don't shoot. He crashed the barrel down over the dog's head. It fell away, whimpering, then silent. Lights went on on the porch of the house, people ran out chattering in excitement. Behind him he could hear the men coming. They knew where he was now. He ran on ahead. There were shots, from the house this time.

He ran through the gate in front, out into another street, up the street, still a moment ahead. There was a gate ahead. He fumbled with it; it was locked. Across the street there was another, half open. He ran across, through it, closed it behind him. He leaned up against it, breathless, unable to move. The others were out in the street now, not sure which way he had gone. He heard them running, some down the street, some up, past the gate. Then the ones who had gone down the street, back up again, past the gate too. The sound of them got smaller in the distance.

They had lost him, but he couldn't stop. Any moment they might realize that he hadn't gone on, that he must be hiding again in one of the walled yards.

Where would he go? He thought of the train, but it had gone, long ago. If he could get to the police—but this was deep in the heart of the Huk country. If the officials in Mankaro had been Huk sympathizers, these were even more likely to be. He couldn't take a chance on that.

He had to force his legs to move. Not out into the street. Back, through the yard, to the yard behind, to the next street, up a block, over. He had no idea where

he was going. At the corner there was a passenger jeepney letting a man off. He yelled, "Wait," at the jeepney and ran to catch it. "You go down town?" he asked the driver. The driver nodded and he got in. The only other passengers were two girls. They shrank away from him, their faces alarmed. He could understand why. He knew how he must look, wet, bearded. He sank down in his seat, trying to look inconspicuous in the brightly-lighted jeepney. He looked at the girls. You've got better reason than you know to be afraid, he thought. Any minute one of those men may spot me. When they begin to fire this time, all of us will go.

The jeepney stopped again, picked up another passenger, a small boy. He wasn't afraid. He grinned and said, "Hello, Joe." Jess tried to grin back. He couldn't. They were reaching the center of town now. It was a big town, much bigger than Mankaro. A few blocks ahead he could see the town plaza. He recognized it; it was San Angelo. Here there were a few telephones, he knew; he remembered a blue sign, "Manila Overseas Telephone Company Here," when he'd passed through. If he could get to a telephone, call Manila.

It was after nine o'clock. Who would he call at this time of night in Manila? Some sleepy Officer of the Day in the Defense Department? Some secretary in the President's office? Every instinct told him to wait, to sink back into the darkness, out of sight, away from Senator Arias' men, roaming the town, looking for him.

It was Tuesday night, though. There could be no waiting. He had to get the officials in Manila, warn them, tell them how little time they had. Two days. Two days until Friday. Otherwise on Friday the President would walk into the trap, underground rebels all over the country, experienced in years of guerilla fighting, would rise. The Senator had said, confidently, on Friday there would be a new government.

He leaned over and tapped the driver on the shoulder. "You know where there's a telephone?" he asked.

"Sure," the driver said. "At the Good Luck Panciteria. Just there." He pointed into the next block. "You want to telephone?"

"Yes, let me out there," Jess told him. He gave the driver ten centavos and got out. It had stopped raining, but the air was still hot and heavy with moisture and the sky was dark overhead. Across the street the Good Luck Panciteria was empty, its bright lights shining down uselessly on dirty tablecloths, a tired waitress, the impassive Chinese owner.

He went across and went in. The telephone was in front, in an enclosure built shoulder high. Too hot here for telephone booths. He couldn't telephone from there, stand in the bright

lights in the window of the restaurant, waiting for them to come by.

The waitress looked at him expectantly, glad of a customer. "You like to eat something?" she said.

He said, "Is there any place else where I can find a telephone?"

It wasn't a good opening. She sniffed and frowned. "What's the matter with this one, Joe?" she said.

He tried again, trying to speak naturally, keep the urgency out of his voice. "I've got an important call to make—I don't want to be interrupted. Somebody might come by, outside, and see me." Somebody might come by now, he thought, while I'm talking to you. And that would be the end of you, too.

She shrugged. "No place else open except the telephone office. In the plaza." She nodded her head toward the plaza.

The plaza. That would be worse. At least this was on a side street. He couldn't take a chance on going across the plaza, standing there in the middle of town to make a call. He couldn't take a chance on making a call here either, but he'd have to, have to risk it, hurry, speak quickly, clearly, so they'd understand, then get away, fast, before it happened.

He gave the girl two pesos and asked her to bring change. He picked up the telephone receiver. The operator took a long time to answer. He jiggled the receiver hook. Who would he call at this time of night? Start at the top. The President—no, he'd never get through to him. The Chief of Staff. The Secretary of Defense. He had no idea what their names were. He'd never thought he'd care.

Finally the operator answered. "Get me the Secretary of Defense, in Manila," he told her. "And hurry. As fast as you can." He looked over the edge of the telephone booth, out into the street. There was no one there, now.

It seemed endless, the time it took. She had to call Information in Manila. Information took a long time to answer. Then back to Manila operator. Finally they were ringing the number. Why did everyone take so long to answer? He beat his fist against the side of the booth in impatience.

Someone did answer. "Let me speak to the Secretary, right away," he said. "Tell him it's important."

"Who's calling, please?" the voice said. So relaxed. So deliberate.

"Butler. Jess Butler."

"One moment, sir."

The Secretary answered. "This is Chavez," he said. 'What is it?"

He had to marshall his story, tell it quickly. "I'm an American. I've got some information I stumbled onto, something terribly important, and dangerous. You'll have to act fast. There isn't much time."

"What is it?" Chavez said quickly.

"On Friday the Huks are planning a coup. They'll try to take over the government. The President's walking into a trap when he goes to Paco Point. That's a distribution center for arms for the Huks."

"Paco Point? Where in Paco Point?"

"Paco Point. The Villa! There's a warehouse there full of Russian arms, trucks loading them out of there."

"You must be out of your mind," Chavez said. "That's Senator Arias' place. I've spent many weekends there myself."

"Sure, Senator Arias," Jess said. "He's behind it. At the head of it. If you don't act now you'll be working for him on Friday."

"That's ridiculous," Chavez snorted. "What's your name? Who are you? What you're saying is serious slander. I'll see to it that action is taken against you."

"You damned fool!" Jess roared. "Where do you think boxes of ammunition with red stars on them come from? What do you think they're for? That bodega was full of them. I saw it myself."

"Do you think we can't take care of the President?" Chavez cried furiously. "The Secret Service men go ahead of the President. They've checked everything at Paco Point already. If you mean the Medoc Mining Company bodega there's nothing in it but mining supplies. You're dreaming, or drunk."

Jess had to grip the edge of the booth with all his strength. Finally he could say, "I know you take care of the President. I know the bodega was empty. But I saw it when it was full. I told you, it's a distribution center, the trucks were carrying it off. But it will be full again tomorrow. Another shipment's coming in. Senator Arias told me, himself. Check it again, will you?"

"Certainly not. Insult an important, trusted person like Senator Arias on the statement of a drunken American? The Huks are out in the hills. Everybody knows that. Taruc. Llava. They're the leaders. You'd better sober up and get some sense in your head before you get in trouble."

Oh, you blind, stupid, pigheaded fool, Jess thought. I can't convince you. You won't let yourself see the danger. It was useless. He hung up, and leaned wearily against the side of the booth. What else could he do, who else could he call? He looked out into the street without seeing, his mind refusing to work.

The waitress started across the room to him. "Anything wrong?" she asked. He shook his head.

Outside a car stopped. A man had gotten out before Jess realized what was happening. In the instant that the man raised the carbine he knew. He hit the floor, flat. "Duck," he shouted. The waitress looked at him stupidly. The shots began. Across the front

of the restaurant, back again. The glass window shattered. Fragments fell all over the floor. The waitress screamed and fell, heavily. Behind the counter the Chinese slumped silently. There was a thud as his body fell off the stool and hit the floor.

Outside there was the wild roar of the car as it raced off. Then it was silent there, too.

There was a gash in the side of his head where a piece of glass had fallen and cut him. He put his arm up against it to try to stop the blood. The footing of the window had protected him from the shots. He looked at the waitress. She was lying very still in the middle of the floor. He bent over her. She was dead. Behind the counter the Chinese was dead, too.

Did they think they had got him also? He couldn't stand here in the light, waiting for them to drive by again to see. Would they do that? Or would they be sure enough, or still enough afraid of the public, to want to get out of town themselves now? People were running now, approaching the restaurant to see what had happened. He couldn't stay to answer questions. He couldn't afford to take the chance that these officials, like those in Mankaro, would be pawns of Senator Arias.

He went out toward the back, through the kitchen, out the back door into an alley. He walked quickly over to a dark street and stood waiting. At the corner, at the street on which the restaurant faced, he could see people rushing along toward it. Good Luck Panciteria. Good luck to all of you he thought.

He stopped, trying to think what to do. Wearily he thought, why should he care what happened to this lousy country? Let the Huks have it. If the Defense Department was so blind, so stupid, that they couldn't take a warning, if the provincial authorities were already in league with the Huks, let them have it.

If only it were that way. If only it were that easy. Tell Senator Arias, "Look, I'm not telling anybody. I'm just leaving. Goodbye." They'd never let him get away. If they didn't get him before Friday, they would after. If they were successful. The only chance in the world he had of staying alive was to see that they weren't successful, to get to somebody, convince someone before Friday. Before it was too late.

He thought of the American Embassy. If he could call them. they'd take an American seriously. And when they spoke to the Defense Department it would mean something. Sure, go back into the Good Luck and put in your call, he thought. Just like that. They love to have your telephone business.

The only other place open was the telephone office, the waitress had said. On the plaza. Maybe the Senator's men were gone now. Maybe they thought they'd got

him. Or they'd wait, to see. Maybe he'd have time to get to the plaza, get the call through. Whether he would or not, there was nothing else to do.

He didn't want to go past the restaurant. He turned and went back, then over to the next block and up toward the plaza. There was a park in the middle of the plaza, shadowy and poorly lit. On the other side was the telephone office, in the ground floor of a Chinese hotel, in a narrow block between two streets.

He paused to scan the plaza again, then walked swiftly down the street, keeping in the shadows of dark store fronts. Once a car came around the plaza, fast. He shrank back into a doorway. It was nobody, a fellow and a girl, laughing, driving too fast. He started again. Turn here. Don't run. There's the telephone company.

There was a single stringy-haired operator on duty. She looked sullen and indifferent. Even so he'd have liked to warn her, tell her to get the call through and get out of the way. But here, in San Angelo, there was no one he could trust. She might warn them.

He went to the end of the counter and told her, "Get me the American Embassy in Manila, will you?" He waited impatiently while she put the call through. She motioned then to one of the booths across the room. It was directly in line with the front of the office. There were only two booths. Just give me five minutes, he thought. Five minutes is enough, and then I can get out of here. He picked up the telephone receiver and said, "Hello."

"Yes, what is it please?" a languid voice said.

"Who is this speaking?"

"Isherwood, night duty officer."

"This is Jess Butler," he began tensely. "I'm an American citizen. I'm registered there with you. Look, I'm in trouble. We're all in trouble."

"Really, Mr. Butler," the faint voice said. "What do you want us to do?"

"Just listen," he said furiously. "I haven't even begun. I was going to spend my vacation at Paco Point. That's up on the coast, about fifty kilometers from Mankaro. That's where the President's going on Friday. I stumbled on a Huk arsenal there. I found out they're planning to strike on Friday, all over the country. They've been after me ever since. I've been burned, shot, chased all the way here. They're still after me."

Isherwood was plainly bored. "Why not call the Department of National Defense?" he said indifferently.

"I tried that," Jess said heatedly. "Why do you think I'm calling you? I couldn't get them to understand. The Secretary was insulted."

"I don't understand. Just what did you expect the Embassy to do?"

Jess gritted his teeth in an effort to keep his temper. "Get in touch with the Philippine government! Warn them, explain to them—"

"We just can't go charging out into the night for every American that gets drunk and gets in trouble," Isherwood said patiently.

"I'm not drunk," Jess shouted. "I'm not asking you to get me out of trouble. I'm asking you to help the whole country. This is serious, don't you understand? They've got a shipload of arms, and more coming in—"

"Yes, Mr. Butler, I understand how serious it is. Why don't you come to Manila and make a report yourself? That really would be best. Goodnight."

He had hung up.

Jess looked at the receiver. There was no time to shout, to curse. He'd had dealings with the Embassy before. He needn't really have expected any more out of them than that. There was one more person he'd try, and after that he'd give up. He remembered a U. S. Army Major, on duty with the Philippine government as adviser in the Defense Department. I know him, he thought. At least his head is level. Maybe he can do something. He turned to tell the operator to get Major Paul Wood in Manila.

Across the plaza was the car. Coming, not too fast, around the park in the center, toward the telephone office. He was trapped here in this shallow office. This time they'd make sure. This time they'd come in. He dropped the receiver. It clattered against the wall. The operator looked up, startled. "Where's the door?" he said. Her mouth dropped open. "The door! The back door!" She didn't need to answer. He could see for himself. There wasn't any.

There was an instant before the car got around the plaza. They couldn't know he was in the telephone office. They were just looking. There was a chance. He had to make a dash for it. Get away.

At the door the car was closer than he'd thought. He stood, silhouetted in the light of the office. They'd seen him. The car roared as they gunned it forward. No time to think where to go. Off, up the sidewalk. Behind him the shots began, stitching the place where he'd stood. He heard the glass fall, crashing onto the sidewalk, as he ran.

The hotel? He started to run inside. No, he'd be bottled up again. He had to get to where there were more people, lose himself in the crowd. He turned up the street beyond the hotel. People were turning, staring. It had begun to rain again, light drizzling rain. It was hard to see where to go. The sidewalk was narrow; part of the time he was running in the street. The street was crooked; it divided here, one way there, one way here. Cars seemed to be coming at him from everywhere, their lights refracted by the rain drops, blinding

him. Not there, across the street, losing time dodging the cars. He followed the sidewalk on to the left.

He realized suddenly that he was coming back to the plaza. The street bent back to the plaza. The car was there, coming to meet him. Another car, too. Men on the sidewalk, approaching. He was caught in the headlights.

People realized something was wrong. They drew back off the sidewalk, in clusters, watching. Clearing the way to the target. In the street a Buick stopped, the driver got out to see what was happening. A car. Empty. Still running. Jess ran into the street, threw the driver aside. He fell, clutching at the door handle. Into the car; duck. Bullets shattered through the windshield, spattered the mud in the street. No time to close the door. The gears screamed as he shifted. Now the gauntlet, past the cars. He crouched down, too low to see where he was going. He could only press the accelerator all the way to the floor, shoot through. There was a crash as he ground against another car, ripping fenders.

They hadn't expected this. They were still for a moment before the shots began again. He was past. Then a hail of them, across the back of the car. He must be at the plaza now. He raised to look, swung around, sheared a wooden post at the corner. The car wobbled, then steadied. There were other cars between them now. He could straighten up. He raced on down the street, out the corner of the plaze. In the seat behind someone began to scream. There was someone in the car. He hadn't noticed. He pressed the car faster and faster. He didn't dare look back.

She screamed, "Stop! Stop! Where are you going?"

He didn't know. He couldn't answer anyway. Houses were thinning out now. He'd soon be in open country. He looked back. There were the lights of a car behind, not far behind. Desperately he pushed the car screaming around the sharp curves.

She was beating on his back with her fists. "Stop, stop," she kept screaming. He twisted around not losing any speed and knocked her away with one elbow. She fell back in the seat of the car. She stopped screaming. The car churned off into the road shoulder. He grabbed the steering wheel with both hands, brought it back on the road. He turned his head back again, quickly, to look. Were they gaining? He couldn't tell.

They were in open country now. The road was concrete, straighter. The main highway. Behind him, the other car. There was no turning off. Nothing but rice fields on either side. The next town, how far was it? He didn't know. Too far, anyway. He looked again, briefly. They were pulling up on him.

He took out the pistol. He had

no idea if there were any bullets left in it. They were too far to fire at yet. What good would it do, anyway?

They were beginning to fire now. They were close enough—but they had carbines. He tried to bring the pistol across, out the window, to fire. It was awkward, nearly impossible. He fired, once, then again. He hadn't hit anything. The third time there was a click. The pistol was empty. He dropped it, put his hand back to the steering wheel.

The car shook all over as they raked the back of it. He wondered about the woman in the back seat. She hadn't made a sound. Another burst of bullets. The steering wheel wrenched out of hands, the car plunged down the shoulder of the road. The tires. They'd got the tires. He flung himself out of the car, down to the floor of the ditch. The back door opened. The woman sat there. He grabbed her leg. She resisted. "Get down, you fool, you'll be killed," he hissed. She came tumbling out, flat onto the ground beside him.

The other car skidded to a stop beyond them. There was silence for a moment. He nudged the woman. Flat on their faces they began to inch along the bottom of the ditch. The men were approaching from the other car. He had to get away from the road. In the darkness he raised his arm to pull himself over into the field beside the road. There was a living fence, kakawati trees, pruned and grown and pruned again, thick, impenetrable. There was no getting through it.

In the silence shots rang out again. The men were firing at the car, taking no chances as they approached it. They fired steadily back and forth across the car, in a very fury of firing, the clatter rising in a shattering crescendo of noise. Finally they stopped, into silence that was as loud as the noise.

The other car was turning around, driving back up toward the wreck. Briefly as the headlights fell against the fence he could see an opening in it ahead. He began to crawl toward it. He wanted to leave the woman behind, here in the bottom of the ditch. He couldn't. She'd have to come too. Anyone they saw would be a target. He tugged at her shoulder. She began to crawl after him.

The men were at the wreck now. He could hear excited voices. He had only an instant before they realized he wasn't in it. No time to crawl. He nudged the woman, pointed at the opening. "Through there," he said. "Stand up." She understood. They stood up, ran, briefly outlined in the headlights, then through the opening. They fell, with a splash, into the rice paddy.

There was a moment of silence, then a burst of fire, sharply, against the fence of kakawati trees. They had heard the splash.

The shots, though, were up above. They hadn't seen where he'd gone through. He and the woman lay silent in the rice paddy, fearful of moving, making more noise. The spotlight of the car began to rake the fence, filtering through the trees, throwing their shadows across the paddies. Any minute they'd see the opening, come through, be on them.

He prayed that there were more openings in the fence, enough to confuse them. He knew there were not, though. There was only the one. If they could get to the dikes between the paddies, they could run, silently.

He raised up inch by inch, cautiously, silently. Beside him he could feel the woman move, instinctively, following him. There was no way of telling where the nearest dike was; they moved ahead blindly, away from the fence. The light raked the fence again. They ducked. As it passed they saw the dike, a meter away. They moved toward it.

The men had seen the opening. They were at it now. There were voices, sudden quick shots. No time for silence now. They ran toward the dike, on to it, ahead. It was slippery, muddy, impossible to run on, as footless as the paddies beside it. They had to keep running, slipping, sliding, falling, now on one side, now on the other.

The men could not fail to hear them. He could only hope to get far enough, to run ahead, lose them finally. The men were through the opening now, splashing, uncertain, their flashlight cutting through the darkness. He ducked quickly behind the dike. The woman was still behind him. She ducked too. He could hear her breath, gasping. If you scream, he thought—if you scream now they'll be on us before you finish. She was silent beside him.

The men's splashing continued. They were coming toward them. They were holding the flashlight down, having to, to walk on the dikes, and still falling, splashing. He began to move, across the paddies, ignoring the slippery treacherous dikes now.

The plowed bottoms of the paddies were slippery too. The woman fell. He ducked, without thinking, at the splash. Behind them there was a burst of shots; above, the beam of the flashlight moving back and forth. Then the men set out again toward them. He and the woman began to move too, barely able to see now in the darkness. They veered off to the right. If they could get out of the path of the men, let them go on ahead—

The men were spreading out, spreading to cover the rice field, track them down. He had no idea how many there were. They seemed to be everywhere, splashing, moving through the rice fields. They had only one flashlight. He could see it moving off ahead. He stood holding his breath, waiting for one of them

to come close enough to see him.

Separated, they wouldn't fire until they were close. If they did they might get one of their own men. The whole area seemed to be full of them. They were everywhere, all around him. They were moving silently too. Only now and then could he hear a splash that told where one of them was.

How long would they stay, going back and forth, searching the paddies for him? When would one of them, his eyes accustomed to darkness, be on him? Everything in him tore at him to get up and run, run away from here. He forced himself to stay still.

The light from the flashlight was getting farther way, and the isolated noises from the men. Now it was time to move, try to get back to the road, away. He began to move, diagonally, away from the men, away from the opening they'd come through, back to the road. The soft plowed bottom of the paddies sucked at their feet, the dikes rose in their way to be stumbled over. It was agonizing going, impossible to keep oriented, keep in the same direction. They had to move, though. The men would realize soon that they'd gone too far, passed them. They'd be coming back.

Rising in the darkness ahead he could make out the dark outline of trees against the dark sky. If this was the road—but it was too close, the trees too high. Or did the road bend here, were there taller trees ahead? He didn't know. He pushed himself ahead, anxious to reach them.

They were coming closer to the trees. It was not the road. The trees were isolated, in a group together, an island rising in the midst of the rice paddies. They walked out of the paddies onto solid ground. He knew instantly what it was, a tenant's house set in the midst of the fields he cultivated. It stood there in the center of the island, a small bamboo house on high stilts.

They couldn't approach it. There might be people inside who would wake, cry out, give the alarm. Then the men would be back. They sank down on the ground. It was bare of grass, wet, running wet from the rain, but solid. Not the clutching, yielding slipperiness of the paddies. His feet were numb from the water. He began to shake. He gripped his legs with his hands but he couldn't stop.

The woman was sitting there, not saying anything. If he could get back to the road, drop her, be on his way without her—

He said, "Are you all right?"

She whispered. "Yes."

"I'm sorry," he said, trying to explain. "I had to get away." She didn't answer. He said, "We could go up to the house, or under it—there'd be more shelter."

"There might be somebody in it," she objected. "They might cry out."

"We'll go quietly—under the house. Come on." They got up

and moved silently through the darkness to the house. They stood outside it hesitantly, waiting for the people inside to wake, to scream, to fire. There was no sound.

She said, "There are no pigs or chickens. I think no one is here. Probably they moved to the *barrio*, closer to other people."

He said, "Wait, I'll try to see." The house was on stilts, its floor above his head, a shanty with a crude ladder instead of steps up to the door. Gingerly, silently, he moved up the ladder. The door was sagging open on its improvised hinges. Inside it was dark, too dark to see, but there was the atmosphere, the feeling, of emptiness. No sound of breathing or turning—or was there someone there, waiting, holding his breath?

He moved slowly on up the ladder until he could lean inside the door, feel with his hand, reaching nothing but the empty bamboo floor. They wouldn't have the door open on a night like this, but it had hung open. He reached the top of the ladder and stepped inside the house.

There was no one inside. The back door hung open also, the shutters gone from the windows, the house abandoned. The terror of the Huks' night raids had driven whoever had lived there to the company of closer neighbors. He went to the door again, and called down softly to the woman below. "Come on. It's empty."

She began to climb the ladder. The peeled tree branches, cut and laid into the place for rungs, were slippery. He had almost fallen on it; he knelt and held out his hand to her. He was not quick enough. She stumbled suddenly, landed flat against the ladder with a gasp. She didn't fall, though; she had caught on above with her hand. Silently she began to climb again. She stepped off into the room.

He could feel her shaking, wet, cold, afraid. If she began to cry, to have hysterics—He whispered quickly, "You were right, no one's here. It's dry. Maybe we'll dry off by morning. Don't be afraid. Everything's all right now."

She said, "I'm so cold." Her voice shook.

He tried to laugh. "Sit close to me, here," he told her. "Maybe we can keep each other warm." They sat together in a corner of the room, away from the open window. She crowded under his arm, still shaking. He wondered briefly what she looked like, who she was. He knew nothing of her except that she was small under his arm.

His mind went racing on, anxiously turning over the possibilities for getting away. There was no way of telling how far the men would go, how long they would search, where they would wait. They would wait. They were determined now to get him at any cost. They had shown themselves in town, killed how many people

—if they only knew how little impression their secret had made on the authorities. But they couldn't realize that.

Somewhere, somehow, he had to get through to Major Wood, convince him, let him convince the Defense Department. It was all he could do now. There were still two days to do it in. Only two days. Friday would be too late. Friday the president would be in the trap, the fuse would be lit, the country would go off.

He felt the woman tense suddenly, her hand grip his knee. She had heard something. Instantly he stopped thinking, straining every muscle to listen. In the distance there were sounds, the men coming. They had seen the island too. They were doubling back to it, to search. No time now to think of tomorrow, the president, the country. Not when the men would be on them any minute, walled up in this bamboo shanty. He rose silently, moved to the window. He could hear the woman gasp as she caught her breath involuntarily.

Through the window he could see the light flickering through the trees as the men came closer to the island. There was no time to wait. They had to get out of the house, now. "Come on," he whispered urgently. She rose, unquestioning. He could hear her breathing heavily, in panic. He took her hand, squeezed it hard. She mustn't cry out now.

He paused momentarily in the doorway, the woman behind him. At the edge of the island he could hear the men splashing. Already that close. It seemed lighter outside, much lighter than in the house. Like standing in the sun waiting to be shot at. That was imagination, though. He started down the ladder, leaning back, bracing himself with his hand on the side, but going quickly, silently. He was almost down. He turned then, as the woman began to descend. He held his breath. God, if you fall, he thought. She didn't fall. She caught his hand, came on down quickly.

He directed her with his hand. They moved swiftly away from the house. There was no more splashing now, but the sound of running feet. The men were out of the paddies, onto the island. He couldn't talk to her now, and there was no time anyway. He moved into the trees. She followed instinctively.

The men were going to the house first. He could hear them moving together, their voices rising now and then. He thought of going back into the paddies, while they were together at the house. A sound would bring them, though. He was afraid to try it. They had reached the house. There were no more footsteps, no voices.

The sound was so sudden that he almost cried out. The sudden sharp shattering burst of the carbine near by. They were firing into the house, back and forth,

again and again. Not waiting to see if it were empty, or if the occupant was the man they were chasing. They were taking no chances.

He heard a sharp command. The firing stopped. There was silence again. They were going into the house now. That would take only a minute. He heard one say, in the dialect, "Nobody here." Now they would comb the island. They were beginning already, how many of them, six, a dozen, everywhere, their light flashing. He moved silently, farther away, toward the edge of the island, the woman behind him. The light was coming nearer. The tree was too small. It would expose him when the light fell on it. They moved again, a bamboo thicket, the far side of it, pressed up against it, ignoring the sharp thorns tearing clothes and flesh, not even breathing, not even breathing as light fell around it. They were going to pass through here. He tried to move around, keep on the other side of the bamboo. There were men coming from that side. He tried to press into the bamboo, bleeding at the cuts from the thorns. The thicket, made of many tall bamboos, was unyielding, impenetrable. The men were coming closer, the light flickering everywhere. It was impossible to evade them here, impossible to move. He stepped aside again, this time on dead bamboo. It broke like a drumbeat, sharp, in the air.

It seemed louder than the sound of the shots into the house. Before it was finished he was off, instinctively, dashing through the darkness to the mango tree he had seen in the flickering light. There was the sudden burst of shots again, running, the light on the spot where he had stood. The woman, where was she? No time to think of her now.

The branches of the mango tree swept low, almost to the ground, thick and sturdy. Without thinking he began to climb, blindly, ignoring the pain as his head hit branches above. The woman was behind him again. How did she know, how did she follow him? He continued to climb silently.

The men were at the bamboo thicket now, surrounding it, flashing the light all over it. There were sharp angry voices. They spread again. If they came under the tree, flashed the light up— He thought wildly of climbing out one of the sturdy branches, over the paddies, then into the water, away again. That was worse, though. Better to climb, up, up. From the size of the branches the tree must be fifty, sixty feet high, an old tree. He kept on climbing above the noise of the men on the ground. He wondered about the woman. He thought of her slipping on the ladder and caught his breath. If she slipped again, here—

They were coming back to the tree now. He flattened against the

trunk. Was he high enough? Would the light reach him, would they see—the words went around and around in his brain. They were under the tree now. This time they couldn't miss.

His footing, chosen in haste, was bad; his feet were gradually slipping on the wet, slippery branch. The trunk was too big for his arms to go around; he held to it as tightly as possible, not daring to look down, his arms slipping on the trunk too, while his feet felt tentatively for sounder footing.

It seemed like an age while he moved his feet silently, slipping, slipping from the trunk, looking for a better stance on the branch. He couldn't hold onto the trunk alone any more. He put his feet down where they were, their grip no better than before. He could hear voices below again, see thin edges of light as it reached up through the leaves. Had they seen him? Would they think of mounting into the tree for a better look? Or would they fire, brutally, indifferently, again and again through the branches? He held his breath and waited.

They seemed to be spending an endless time under this tree. What were they doing? What were they doing? It seemed impossible for them not to know he was there; his very being seemed to scream the knowledge.

They were moving on, now. They hadn't known he was there, hadn't seen him through the thick leaves of the mango, hadn't thought it likely enough to get closer or to fire. He sat down gingerly in the angle of the branch and the trunk and leaned against the trunk. He was sick, nauseated suddenly now that the danger was gone.

He couldn't see the light any more, through the thick mango leaves. It was hard to tell where they were. He could hear signs of them now and then, footsteps, a voice. They were searching separately again, combing the area. He wondered if they were following any plan, if one of them, any minute, might come back to the mango tree, maybe not even recognize it as the one they had stood under before. This time perhaps he would look more closely, think how easy it would be to climb, and follow, himself, up the branches, with his gun and his light. Jess gritted his teeth, trying to shut the picture out of his mind. One man, two men, he thought, all right. But behind one, the rest come. They don't climb. They fire first. He sat, waiting. No one came.

There were fewer sounds now, and farther off. They had finished searching the island, convinced themselves there was no one here. He wondered if it would occur to them too to use the shelter of house for the rest of the night. If they did—If they did he could get away, while they waited. But they were going off, back into the rice paddies. He could hear a quiet

splash now and then as they moved off.

He began to move down from his precarious seat. He had forgotten the woman. She was on another branch, lower, on the other side of the tree. He could hear her now, faintly, as she began to climb down too. She dropped onto the ground ahead of him. He was too tired to think, or talk. He could only press her arm, congratulate her silently for getting through more than he'd thought a woman could stand.

She whispered, "We'll go back to the house? They won't come back there."

He said, "No," sharply. He could still hear the sound of the shots ripping through the bamboo. "Here. The tree is enough." They sank exhausted on the ground beneath the mango tree.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19

He stirred restlessly when she shook him, and then was instantly awake, back in a world of flight and escape. It was just day; the trees, the house, and beyond them the watery rice fields, were beginning to emerge in the dull gray light of the morning. It was no longer raining, but there was no sun, no sunrise.

He stood up and said, "I shouldn't have waited. I'd better go." He looked at her. She was not a woman; she was just a school girl, seventeen, eighteen, pretty in a way. A little vain, too; she had found the well and washed off the mud and straightened her hair back before she'd called him. He thought, what a girl you are—you went through that whole business without screaming. He said, "I'll never be able to pay you for what I put you through last night. I can only tell you how sorry I am, and that I had to—I didn't know you were in the car."

She said, "The well is there, if you want to wash." She smiled. "You're awfully dirty. Then we'd better go."

He said, "Yes, I guess I am. But you'd better stay here. People will be coming soon. They'll help you get back. If you go with me—"

She said, "No. I'll wait and go with you. Give me your shirt. I'll try to rinse it out."

He was half irritated, half amused by her persistence. "Look, I didn't take you to raise. You can't go with me. Don't you realize? Any minute they may be here again. I've got to go and go fast. I can't with you with me."

"You won't be so noticeable if you're with a girl. We'll be two peasants in the rice fields." She grinned. "You don't look much like a peasant. You're so big. But with me—And I guess I have a right to ask you to take me home!"

He grinned back at her. It was impossible to do anything else. The determination of these Spanish girls—or was she a *mestiza?*

It didn't matter; he couldn't help liking it. He said, "I guess you have," and took off the shirt and gave it to her. He drew up a bucket of water for her, and then another. He was coated with mud from the paddy bottoms. He washed quickly. There was no time to waste. It was hard to keep from looking up, stopping to listen, expecting them every moment. "Do you have any idea where we are?" he asked her.

"Somewhere between San Angelo and Pamplona, I don't know where," she said. "Not very far from Pamplona, I think."

He was losing ground. He'd gone north, back toward Mankaro again. "If we get to Pamplona—are there any telephones there?"

"I don't think so. But at Pamplona we can catch a bus to San Angelo. It's not very far—twenty-five kilometers."

I don't want to call from San Angelo, he thought. He had to, though. There was only one more day. Or maybe if he could catch a Manila bus in Pamplona he could get there in time. Time enough to think of that. He was not even in Pamplona yet.

She stood up and handed him his shirt and watched him gravely as he put it on, hurriedly, fumbling with the buttons. She had seen his bandaged side. "You've been hurt already."

"Yes. Come on, let's go." They walked to the edge of the island, to a path leading through the rice fields. If he could only have found it last night.

"What are they hunting you for?" she asked. "Who are they?" She was following just behind him on the narrow path.

"Huks," he said briefly.

"I thought they were Huks. But they searched so long—they were so determined."

He looked back at her and smiled. "I guess you're entitled to know. Maybe you'll believe me, at least. I was up at Paco Point—you know where that is? That's Senator Arias' place—and I stumbled onto a Huk arsenal there. He's with the Huks. They're planning to overthrow the government, Friday. Day after tomorrow. That's why they're after me so hard. To get me before I can get the news to Manila."

He heard her gasp behind him. "Senator Arias!" she said incredulously. "But he's—but they were after you; it must be." Again he liked her for the way she handled herself. She'd had sufficient proof. She didn't stop to argue. She said, "What will you do? You'd better go to the officials in Pamplona." She stopped, then began again. "No—No, you'd better not. Everybody here is afraid of the Huks. They wouldn't do anything. They might even turn you over to them."

"I know. That's what happened to me in Mankaro, but I managed to get away. I'll try to telephone again from San Angelo, or maybe I can get all the way to Manila this morning."

"Friday?" he heard her say.

"Friday."

"We've still got today and tomorrow, then." They were close to the fence along the road now. She said, "Wait, I'll go ahead and see if there's anything on the road. They won't recognize me." She stepped around him on the narrow path and went on, surefooted, toward the road. He watched her and thought, she may be a schoolgirl, but not in mind or in body. Her mind was calm and controlled; her body was mature and delicately rounded in the still-wet, clinging material of her dress. She disappeared through the fence at the point where the path approached the road. She was out of sight for a moment and then stepped back through and waved. "There is no one," she said. He went on up to her.

"We'd better walk on the inside of the fence, though," he told her. "We'll have to hurry, too. I don't know when those men will come back, or if they will. They may be waiting in San Angelo and Pamplona, for whichever town I show up in." He looked at her steadily. "You shouldn't go with me. You saw how they fired through that house last night. They wouldn't hesitate because you were with me."

Without hesitating she said, "I have a stake in this, too. It's my country. Bad enough to have my town, all of Central Luzon, wrecked by them. Not the whole country. Not if I can help. And I can help. I helped you already, scouting the road, didn't I?"

"All right. Let's go then." The footing was easier, but uneven, inside the fence, in the narrow space where the plows could not approach. If only he had thought of it the night before, but he remembered them firing blindly through the fence. He might have been going that way, behind that stretch of fence. "What's your name? Are you going to school? How'd you happen to be out at night last night?"

"Mary Montserrat," she answered. "I'm not a schoolgirl any more; I graduated last year. I was just coming from a party when we stopped to see what was going on. What's your name?"

"Jess Butler. Your driver should have known better than to stop at a time like that, but I'm glad he did. You live in San Angelo?"

"Yes, but we stay most of the time in Manila."

"Your family will be crazy, worrying about you."

"Yes, I'm afraid so," she said quietly. "But I'll be there soon, and the fastest way is from Pamplona."

The thick fence was running out. There were bare stretches of barbed wire, then big acacia trees, occasionally kakawati trees again. There was nothing to do but move over and walk along the road. They looked less conspicuous there, like any pair of peasants on their way to town. It was

easier walking, too. They walked quickly, heads averted from the occasional traffic that passed, a bull cart whose driver stared inquisitively; a ramshackle bus; rarely, an approaching automobile, setting panic in their hearts until it was past.

Any one of them could be the one carrying the men. Any bus could be carrying someone who would bring the news to the men, wherever they were. He told himself, there isn't any choice, it's a chance I have to take. For my own safety, for my own future, I have to get through. Now, today, this morning.

They were approaching the outskirts of Pamplona. There were cluster of shanties along the road, then bigger houses, narrow lanes turning off the main road. He told Mary, "We'd better get off the highway, onto one of these side roads. They may be waiting for me here. If they are, they'll be watching the highway, especially." They turned off onto a narrow dirt road, under dripping acacia trees that spread across it, and continued walking, quickly. "Are you tired?" he asked her.

"No, it's all right," she said, but he could tell that she was tired. There was no stopping, though. She'd soon be home. She could rest then.

The lane developed into a poorly paved, narrow street. They were nearing the center of town. She said, "We'll get a bus at the plaza. I think it's this way." They crossed over, then down again, past small stores now, a shabby market place. The plaza was ahead, a big stone church at one end. He stopped a moment, hesitant to go on. It seemed suddenly to him that he couldn't remember when he hadn't been running, hiding, afraid to walk in the open. He shook off the feeling quickly.

"Wait here a moment," he told her. "Don't go on with me. If they're waiting there anywhere, they won't hesitate to fire, even in the plaza. I'll try to edge up to the corner and get a look."

"No," she said. "I'll go."

"No, it wouldn't mean anything. You don't know them, they don't know you. Just wait." He walked on up to the plaza, hugging close to the walls, and stopped at the corner to look out. Busses were loading, several of them, at the west side of the plaza, piling loads of vegetables and bundles and parcels on top for Manila. Surrounded by crowds of people, small bare-bottomed urchins dashing back and forth, conductors shouting their destinations. Cars passed through the plaza on their way to and from Manila. None stopped. He braced himself, stepped out, forcing himself to walk around the plaza toward the busses.

Nothing happened. They hadn't thought of this. Where were they now? He knew they were still after him, still waiting, someplace, for him. Perhaps they thought he'd take the train again. Or

would they wait outside of town this time, to ambush the bus? Surely not—they couldn't tell which bus he'd be on. Probably they were waiting at San Angelo, knowing he'd have to pass through there, whatever means of transportation he used. They'd know, too. They had this whole part of the country to inform against him.

He walked back to the corner. As soon as Mary saw him she came walking quickly to join him. "Don't walk too close to me," he told her tensely. "Something might still happen."

"Is it all right?"

"I don't know. I didn't see anybody. Nothing happened. Probably they're waiting in San Angelo."

"San Angelo!"

"Maybe. I'll get off before we get into town." He thought suddenly of something. The U. S. Air Base, only four kilometers from San Angelo. Why hadn't he thought of it before—but what good would it have done? He'd certainly had no chance to stop there last night. He was excited now. He could get in there, be safe. They couldn't take any direct action, of course, but they could help, and he'd have time, plenty of time, to talk to the people in Manila. He said, "I'll get off at Clark Field. That's the best way, and you can go on into San Angelo."

There were several busses waiting to go, their conductors standing in the doors shouting, "Manila, Manila, Manila." He started to get on one, but it was nearly empty, with only two or three passengers aboard. He hesitated, his foot on the step. The bus would be slow in getting away; it would wait for more passengers. He looked about apprehensively. He hated to sit here, waiting in the plaza.

Behind him someone said irritably, "Well, make up your mind. Get on if you're going to." He turned and saw it was another American, waiting to get on. He was dressed in khaki, his face red from the sun.

Jess said, "Sorry," and got on. Another American in the bus somehow made things seem a little more secure, at least. He told the driver, "Stop at Clark Field," and the driver nodded. He and Mary went on back and sat down. He looked up at the American as he came in but he didn't speak; he walked on back to the back row and sat down.

The driver was apparently in a hurry to get started. He closed the door and swung out into the plaza. "That's funny," Jess said. "He's leaving the conductor behind."

"Oh, I guess that boy just shouts for customers while the bus is here in Pamplona," Mary said. "Maybe he doesn't go with the bus."

"He didn't wait for any more passengers, either." He was half alarmed, but without any real reason. He looked around the bus.

There were only four other passengers, an old man, a woman and her daughter together, the American. Nothing wrong with that.

"Is something wrong?" Mary asked anxiously.

"No, I don't think so," he told her. "It's all right. It's good not to be in crowds for a change. You should have seen the train I was on." The bus swung around the corner and out onto the main road to Manila. He settled back comfortably in the seat beside her. "It shouldn't take more than an hour to get to San Angelo. Your family will be glad to see you. Maybe when this is all over I can come and visit you myself. Can I?"

"Yes, of course," she said. "In San Angelo, or in Manila? We'll be in Manila, I guess."

"In Manila," he said firmly. "I don't think I ever want to go to San Angelo again."

She was still worried. "If something goes wrong."

"Nothing will go wrong. I can't afford to let it. Too much depends on it. My life, for one thing. I'll get off at Clark Field. I'll be safe enough in there, certainly, and either I can get help from them, or at least I'll be able to telephone Manila. I know an American who's an adviser with the Defense Department."

"I'm afraid," she said. "What would happen if you didn't?"

"They'd take over the country—or they'd try. A lot of people would be killed. Those guys in the government are so blind—the President keeps spouting about the 'success of my peace and order program.' Too bad he wasn't with us last night to see how peaceful and orderly it really is."

"Oh, I hope it will be all right," she said passionately. "I can't remember when this province was peaceful. The Japanese, and then the Huks—"

He pressed her hand. "Maybe we won't wipe it all out this time but we'll keep the worst from happening. And we'll have made a start, anyway."

Her face brightened as she seemed resolutely to cast off her fears. She changed the subject abruptly. "What kind of work do you do?"

"Oh, building roads. Butler Construction Company. I hope you'll hear of that some day. I don't guess you have yet." He thought of the road camp he had left—when? Only Monday morning. They thought he was sitting on the beach at Paco Point getting a sunburn. He'd be able to send them a telegram from Clark Field.

She said, "We'll be coming to Clark Field soon." She looked at him doubtfully, unable to keep from smiling. "Do you think they'll let you in? You look—you look awful."

He hated to think how he looked, touseled hair, beard, wrinkled shirt and pants caked with mud. "I'd better carry a white flag with me, otherwise they might shoot me on sight."

Ahead he could see the four lane highway that cut off at right angle to go to Clark Field. The air base was about a mile off the road. Mary said, "You won't forget to come and see me? Nobody will believe me when I tell them, if you don't."

"Sure I will. I'll wear a carnation in my button hole so you'll recognize me, clean." They were just at the Clark Field road. He waited for the bus to stop.

It didn't stop.

With a sudden burst it gathered speed, shot past the cut-off. She looked at him in consternation. He stood up, shouted, "Stop! That's Clark Field. That's where I want to get off." The driver paid no attention. He bent over the steering wheel, kept on going, faster. It was a trap again. The driver—They'd soon be in San Angelo. He stood up, dashed up the aisle, grabbed the driver by the shoulder. "What's the matter with you?" he yelled. "Stop! I told you to stop at Clark Field."

He felt the gun in his back, then. He let go of the driver's shoulder, turned his head around. The American. In the back the old woman screamed.

He knew the Huks had Americans with them, usually deserters from the Army, some real Communists, mostly ne'er-do-wells. They'd taken it out of the hands of Lopez and his gang, then; put an American on it.

"You've given us a lot of trouble, Butler," he snarled. "But it's nothing to what we're going to give you when we get to San Angelo."

"Go ahead and shoot," Jess said. "When did you ever wait before? Go ahead, kill everybody in the bus, like you did the people in the restaurant." The woman screamed again. Out of the corner of his eye he could see the old man pressing against the side of the bus as though he hoped to melt into it. No help from any of them.

"That was Lopez," the American said. "Those stupid Flips. We'll take care of you, nice and —" He didn't finish. The sound was sharp, like a hammer falling. Jess whirled around instinctively, out of the way. Mary. Mary was behind the American. She'd hit him with all her strength with the heel of her shoe. The gun went off blindly, crashing through the windshield. The driver swerved. The bus was out of control, running down the shoulder of the road. The American slumped to the floor. She hit him again.

They were going to crash. He grabbed the steering wheel across the driver, wrestling to bring the bus back on the road. The driver was helpless with panic. It was awkward, impossible, to steer across him. The bus was rocking, swaying down the shoulder. Any minute it would crash. People were screaming, screaming. He grabbed the driver by the neck, jerked him out of the seat, sent him sprawling against the side of the bus.

He could dart into the seat now, just in time, swing the steering wheel, back on the road, put on the brakes, stop finally, breathless, brakes screeching. The driver was flattened against the door of the bus. When it stopped he opened the door and bolted blindly into the fields, not looking back. In the middle of the bus the old woman was in a frenzy of hysteria, her screams rising over and over again. Mary was still standing over the American, holding his gun now. She handed it to Jess. Her face was pale. She turned quickly, stepped out of the bus onto the road. She stood there leaning against the bus for a moment, sick. When she came back she said apologetically, "The way my heel sank into his head—I didn't know I could do anything like that."

"Thank God you did. That was quick thinking."

"Is he dead?"

"I don't know. Let's get out of here." He took her arm and they stepped down onto the road. They were in the outskirts of San Angelo. "Hurry," he told her. "People will be coming. We don't want to get tied up here. Come on. Let's get down this lane here, out of sight. They may have been following us, too." They ducked quickly down a narrow lane, a bull-cart track. "How did you ever keep those shoes on in the mud last night? I almost lost mine, even."

"I don't know," she said. "I must have known I'd need them." She stumbled and caught his arm. "Jess. Let's stop a minute. I'm sorry, I—"

"Sure," he said. "I don't know how you've stood up under all this. Let's stop at that house. Maybe we can get some coffee."

It was a small bamboo house. They went in the gate and called politely, *"Maganda umaga po."* A woman came to the door and stood nervously looking at them. Jess said, "Could we get some coffee, or some water at least? My—my wife is a little sick." The woman seemed to hesitate, but she stepped back from the door with a gesture for them to come in. The room was bare, a table, rolled sleeping mats, homemade bamboo benches. She brought coffee in glasses and a can of evaporated milk. They thanked her and she went out toward the back, still not saying anything.

The coffee was so hot that it was hard to pick up the glasses. They grasped them at the top, with two fingers, gingerly, and sipped carefully. Mary smiled crookedly at him. "You told her I was your wife."

"I couldn't think of any other justification for bringing you in in this shape. Do you mind?"

"No."

It was nearly noon. A day and a half now. They hadn't got him yet, but they were closing in. They seemed to know his every move, anticipate his appearance. He'd been lucky up to now, but his

luck was bound to run out soon. They had men everywhere, men he'd never seen before, Americans, Filipinos, waiting for him. They controlled all of Central Luzon, had the people under their heel, ready to serve, to inform. He couldn't go back on the road, he couldn't telephone. Not at the Good Luck Panciteria, certainly. Not at the telephone company office. Not anywhere. They'd won their fight, whether they realized it or not. All he could do now would be to stay out of sight, sneak along back ways, try to get out.

He said wearily, "I'd better leave you here. You'll get home all right from here. This is as far as I can bring you. And thanks, thanks for helping me."

"What will you do now?" she said anxiously. "Where will you go?"

"I don't know. I'll have to stay out of sight, try to think of something."

"I'll take you home with me. You'd be safe there. My father will help."

"No," he said firmly. "I'm not getting your family tangled up in my troubles. You've done enough already."

"My father would want to help," she said. "You have to go somewhere. You just can't stay here, or out on the road—My sister's house! She and her husband stay in Manila. The house is closed up." She stood up impatiently. "Come on! The house is all closed up. Only the caretaker. Nobody would ever think of your being there."

If he could get there, wait, tell her whom to call in Manila—if she could get through to Major Wood. Could he ask that much more of her? Was there still a chance? A day and a half yet. Maybe in a day and a half he could walk openly on the streets again, take the bus or the train, safely. "All right," he said. "Is it far?"

"Yes, quite far. Should we wait until dark?"

"No, we can't wait. There isn't time. We're too close to the bus here, and it's too close to Friday." He went into the kitchen to give the woman a peso. She pushed past him into the front room and spoke rapidly in dialect to Mary. Mary pressed her hand briefly and looked up at Jess. "She says it's nothing. We're her guests. But we mustn't stay."

He thought he would never go out a door again without waiting first, looking, bracing himself for shots. They went quickly then out onto the road. "She knew they were looking for you," Mary said.

"Will she tell?"

"I don't know. She might have to. She wouldn't want to, though."

"I'll have to hurry. But we'll have to stay on the back streets, too. That'll make it twice as far. Which way is it?"

"We can cut over through here." They were still on the edge of town, sparsely settled, with

open fields in between. They went across, quickly, apprehensively. "It's on the other side of town, on the Manila side. Oh, I wish it weren't so far. Why couldn't she have built it here?" They were in the middle of the field, half running, speaking in low voices, compulsively, as if they might be overheard.

They came out onto another muddy road, but wider, more of a street. "This way," she said. "We can go up here and then turn, I think." She bit her lip. "I'm sorry, I don't know this part of town very well myself."

"Never mind, we'll make it," he told her. "We'll try to keep heading south until you get your bearings." They hurried, stepping heedlessly over rocks, through mud puddles, once in a while skirting on either side of rutted spots that mired the whole road. There was no one else on the road. At an intersection they turned and began to go south. They were still on the edges, skirting the town. There were lumber mills now, shabby warehouses, bamboo and unpainted wooden houses, occasionally a *sari-sari* store or a *tuba* stand.

The sky was overcast, dark and heavy with accumulated rain. The heat was overpowering. They stopped now and then to rest, pausing apprehensively, flinching at ordinary sounds, hurrying on again, up narrow streets, past impassive Chinese merchants, south again, never knowing if they were already being hunted again, or when they would be overtaken, suddenly, without warning.

"This is the street," Mary said finally. "But down there, still quite far yet."

"We'd better not go on this street," Jess said. "If possible we don't want anybody to see us approaching the house. We'd better go on down a couple of blocks, then over." They walked on down two blocks, then turned and followed the street, parallel with the street the house was on. "Can you tell where the house is? Are we passing it?"

"Yes, just about here," Mary said.

"Can we go in the back?"

"Yes, it goes all the way through. The caretaker's house is in the back, facing the other street."

"What about the caretaker? He'll see us."

"It's all right. Mang Pedro's been with us all my life. He took care of us during the occupation. It's just the same now."

"You're sure?"

"Yes. Come on," she said urgently. "There isn't any other way." They walked three blocks north again, then back halfway down the block. "Here," Mary said softly. There was a stone wall, about five feet high, rising behind it the galvanized roof of a small cottage. Behind that, facing the other street, was a big concrete house, closed, the windows boarded up. "When we're inside go straight up to the big house,"

Mary said. "I'll stop at Mang Pedro's."

They opened the gate and darted quickly, furtively, inside. She squeezed his hand briefly, without saying anything. Then she turned and walked up the steps to the cottage, calling, "Mang Pedro, Mang Pedro." Jess walked swiftly up to the house. It was locked, of course, there was no going in yet. There was no shrubbery around the house to disappear into; shrubbery brings snakes to Filipino houses. He walked to the side, a terrace there, with a great bougainvillea vine growing over it. He went up on the terrace, silently, and stood in the shelter of the bougainvillea.

In a moment she was there again, calling softly. "He wanted to put me in the pot and scrub me with yellow soap," she said, "but I made him give me the key." She showed it to him, tied with string to a big wooden marker. "Come on to the back," she said.

They went in, through the kitchen, the dining room, the *sala,* empty, dark, shadowy, and hot, so hot. "There isn't any furniture," she said. "I'll get something from Pedro for you to sit on."

"Never mind," he said impatiently. "This is fine. After two nights on the bare ground I'm not worrying about my comfort anyway. Mary, can you do something else?"

"Yes, whatever you say," she said quickly.

"Can you go and make a long distance call to Manila? I called them last night, the Defense Department, the Embassy—they didn't believe me. But we've got to try again, we've got to make them understand. I know an American, an adviser at the Defense Department. Major Wood's his name. Call him. Ask him if he remembers me. Tell him what I told you, about the arsenal at Paco Point, about the plans for Friday. Can you do that? Do you understand?"

"Yes," she said. "Major Wood?"

"Paul Wood. He knows me. You'd better hurry, before he leaves the office."

"I'll come back as soon as I can, let you know if I reach him all right."

"Be careful. Goodbye." He looked at her. They had known each other a day, but the day had been a lifetime. She was gone then, slipping out the back door quietly.

He walked restlessly through the house, then sat down on the bottom step of the stairway. If she could get through to Major Wood, if he could use his influence—There was still a day, but only a day. What if she couldn't get in touch with Wood? What if she couldn't convince him? Sweat was trickling down his face. He took off his shirt and wiped his forehead with it. If she couldn't convince him, and who'd think she could, a strange girl out of no-

where with a wild story like that. Maybe Wood wouldn't even remember him.

There was a sharp sound at the back of the house. He froze, listening, his eyes darting around. He was up, suddenly, silently. The men. Had they tracked him already? There were steps, quiet steps, in the kitchen. The stairs—he turned to go up. No, that would make too much noise, take too long. Where else, then? He was boarded in tight. He had the American's gun, still. At least he had that. He stepped back into the corner of the stairwell to wait. He could feel his heart beating, almost hear it in the silence. He squeezed the handle of the pistol.

It was an old man, alone. "Stop," Jess said tensely. "What do you want? Who are you?"

The old man said, "I brought food. In the kitchen. Mary told me."

Mang Pedro. He put the pistol away. "You're Mang Pedro," he said. "I'm sorry, I thought—"

"Mary told me," he said again. "It's all right here. I took care of Mary all her life. She told me to take care of you."

He couldn't help smiling at the little old man. I sure do need somebody to take care of me, he thought. They went out together to the kitchen. The old man had brought the food in a worker's lunch pail, three containers nesting into each other. Rice, a thin soupy mixture with pieces of fish, a banana. "Do you know how to eat rice?" Pedro asked him. "We got no bread. And *sinigang*—maybe you don't like Filipino cooking?" he said hesitantly.

"I like," Jess told him. "I like it fine. I've been here a long time. And I'm certainly not in a position to complain, even if I didn't like it."

"Lots of Americans don't like Filipino cooking," Pedro said. He set the three pieces of the container, now separated, before Jess, and a spoon. Jess began to eat quickly.

"We thought Mary was dead," Pedro said. "We thought the Huks had got her."

"They almost did. She's a brave little girl. I hope she'll be coming back soon now."

"She'll be coming back," Pedro said.

Jess had eaten all of the rice and the fish. He began to peel the banana. The old man gathered up the containers to take away. "Could you bring me in some water?" Jess asked him. "I'd like to wash up. I'm an awful mess."

"Get looking good before Mary comes back, eh?" the old man cackled.

"Well, that wouldn't hurt, I guess," Jess said. "Mostly I'd just like to get some of the mud out of my ears."

"I'll bring, right away." Pedro went out with the lunch pail, leaving Jess standing in the kitchen. He wondered how Mary was making out with Major Wood. The telephone company—after last

night maybe there wouldn't be any telephone service to Manila? So much depending on the thin line strung out, one or two telephones to a town . . . Was it time for her to be back? Could something have happened to her? Did they know her now, too, had they been watching in Pamplona, seen her get on the bus with him, were they looking for her, too? He forced himself to stand still, to wait. It was not time for her to be back. It was a long distance for a tired girl to walk. But alone she'd have taken a jeepney—wouldn't she?

Mang Pedro came back with a basin of water. "It's hot," he said.

"You shouldn't have gone to that much trouble."

"Here is soap, and a razor." He handed him a safety razor and a new blade. "Don't use it much myself. We Filipinos, you know, we don't have so much hair, not like you Americans."

"Thanks, Pedro."

"I'll be back later."

He began to scrub thoroughly. Nothing but a long soak would get him really clean, but at least he could rinse off the sweat and muck and the mud still left from the night before. He was glad Pedro had brought the razor. Something else to do while he waited. There was no mirror. He shaved blindly, but with two days growth of his heavy beard it was easy enough to tell where he had missed. He was finished all too quickly. He rinsed off his face, put the shirt back on and poured the water out. It *was* time for her to be back now, surely.

He went back toward the front of the house. Since Monday night he had been on the run constantly and he was still not free, still not sure. What if— If she hadn't gotten through, if she couldn't convince Wood, what would he do then? Then there would be no getting away from them. He opened the front window and tried to look through the boards across it. There was a narrow crack where two boards met, barely enough to see through. There was nothing in the street, but she would come the back way, of course. It was beginning to get dark. Past six o'clock already, he thought.

He went upstairs, tiptoeing, for no reason except that it would be a long time before he could walk naturally, noisily, again. If ever, he thought. If I have more than a day or two to walk at all in. The rooms upstairs were hot, damp, dark. He walked through them aimlessly, unable to stop, then back downstairs again, into the kitchen, to look through the crack in the kitchen door, to grip the edge of the sink to keep from running out to try to telephone again himself. It was dark outside now. It had gotten dark quickly, as always. Inside it was pitch black.

There was a sudden sound again outside. She was back. Or was it—His hand was on the pistol,

instantly. There was a knock. They wouldn't knock. Neither would she. It was Mang Pedro again. "I brought you a lantern," he said.

"Someone might notice a crack of light through the window."

"Keep it down on the floor, the flame low," Pedro said. "Here are matches."

"You're taking very good care of me, Mang Pedro."

"Best I can," Pedro said, in his thin old voice. He pulled the door to behind him, struck a match and lit the lamp. He turned the wick down until there was barely an edge of flame, and set the lamp on the floor.

"Mary," Jess said. "Is she back? Has she come yet?" But he knew, of course. She wasn't there.

"Not yet," Pedro said. "She said she'd be right back." Pedro was worried, too. "She said she was just going to the telephone office. Why is she telephoning? Why didn't you go?" His voice was mild, but accusing.

He'd thought the old man understood. Maybe he did, really; maybe he was just too worried to think about it. He couldn't explain to him now. He said, "She's making a long distance call. Maybe it's taking a long time to get through. I don't know."

The old man was easily satisfied. "Yes, maybe. The line's not so good." He left the lamp and went out again. Jess wished he could convince himself too. He didn't want the lamp. He didn't want to stay in the house, cooped up, now that it was dark. He bent over quickly, turned the wick until the flame was gone. He stepped outside into the lighter darkness, the moist air. There were lights in the small cottage. He walked around the other way, toward the front of the house, then back to the terrace for a moment, under the bougainvillea again. The air was silent and still in this quiet street.

The sound of the gate opening and closing was soft but he could hear it clearly in the stillness. He stole out, holding his breath, tiptoeing, toward the back door. He could hear her call as he came around the corner, "Jess, Jess," softly.

She was back. He said. "Here, I am," and went quickly to her, followed her on into the house. "What happened to you? What took you so long? I thought you'd run into trouble. Did you get the call through?"

"Yes. Wait. I went home. I had to go home, to tell my father." Of course. He couldn't begrudge her that. "I brought clean clothes for you. My father's almost as big as you are."

Clean clothes. "Never mind the clothes," he said impatiently. "The call. Did you get Major Wood? What did he say?"

"Yes, I got him. I asked him if he remembered you. He said if he didn't the papers would help him. They're full of you."

"The papers? What about the

papers?"

"Oh, Jess," she said, "Senator Arias—They've made it look like you're an escaped criminal, that you shot somebody at Paco Point, that you escaped in Mankaro—I brought the paper with me."

He hadn't thought of that. Senator Arias' influence. He could do that. Now both sides were after him, closing in. He spoke heavily. "What did Wood say, then? Did he believe that?"

"No, I don't think so. He said he thought he knew you better than that." There was still a chance, then. "He wanted to talk to you. I told him you couldn't get to a telephone. The President and Secretary Chavez have already gone."

"Already gone! But it's only Wednesday!"

"They're on the yacht, a whole party of them, so he can work on his speech, or something. He'll send radio messages. He'll try to do something with the Army too, but he says it's hard. They'll think you're just making up the story to clear yourself."

"At least something will get done."

"He's scheduled to go to Paco Point, too. He wasn't going until Friday, but he says he'll go tomorrow. I told him where you are. He'll come here early tomorrow morning."

"He's coming here?"

"Yes, before eight o'clock, he said."

"That leaves one day then. God, I hope he can convince those people how serious this is. Do you think he was really convinced himself?"

"Yes, I think so. He'll be coming here tomorrow morning. You can talk to him then." One day from tomorrow morning. "I brought clothes, and the paper," she said again.

"Oh, I forgot. Thanks, Mary. Wait—Pedro brought me a lamp. I'll get it lit." He struck a match and lit the lamp again. "Where is the paper?"

"Here. You shaved. You look a lot better."

"Yes, Pedro brought me his razor, too." He was scanning the paper hurriedly, holding it down to the poor light. They had done a good job. He was hunted now from every side. He shut his eyes against the black headlines. What could he do now? No one would believe his statement, take him seriously. He wondered if even Major Wood had. Maybe he had other reasons for stopping here tomorrow morning. Maybe that was a trap too.

She said, "Don't forget your clothes."

"What? Oh. Yes, I'd better dress up—for my funeral, I guess."

"Jess! It's bad, but it isn't over yet. Major Wood'll help you when he comes."

"Maybe." She had brought khaki pants and a polo shirt. He took them and went into the dining room. Holding the pistol and his billfold he stepped out of

the other clothes, left them lying where they fell. Underneath the pants he was muddy still. It didn't matter. He put the clean clothes on and went back into the kitchen.

"Now I wouldn't mind being introduced as your wife," she said, trying to make her voice light.

He forced himself to smile, to talk to her. "You look mighty pretty yourself."

"I'm sorry," she said. "That's what made me so late, I guess."

"It was worth it."

"I'm glad."

He looked at her young face, her clear shining eyes in the soft light. He wished he could have met her some other time, some other time when things were quiet and peaceful, when a man could look ahead, plan. He couldn't do that now. He couldn't look more than one day ahead, farther than Friday. He turned away, picked up the paper again. There was a story on the President's trip. He was dedicating the new market in Mankaro, "in the very heart of Huk-land," demonstrating that his "peace and order program" had wiped out the danger in those areas. Peace and order. His face wrinkled in disgust.

"What is it, Jess?"

"Peace and order! He's so determined to get reelected he can't even stop and realize there may be nothing to get re-elected to!" He stopped short, his eye caught by another brief story, hardly more than a paragraph. "Bandits Slay Mankaro Couple." Dr. Desbarro and his wife. He crumpled up the newspaper, sick at the thought. This was the way people paid for helping the enemies of the Huks. No wonder she'd been afraid. And even this didn't stop their bragging about the peace and order program. He stood up wearily. He was responsible for this. He thought of the fear in her eyes, her harsh voice, the last minute gift of the shirt. Wanting to help, and afraid to. Mary looked up questioningly at him. "Some people in Mankaro, a doctor that bandaged up my side. His wife gave me that shirt. They've been killed."

"Oh, Jess! By—?"

"It says 'bandits,' but you know what it was. Mary, you've got to get out of here! Don't you see what can happen to you? The same thing that happened to them!"

"Not unless it happens to you too, as long as I'm with you."

"It could happen to me!" he said, his voice urgent. "Don't you understand? Why should it happen to you too? Go on home. Stay with your family, where it's safe."

She shook her head. "It's too late. If they want me they know already. Going now wouldn't change it."

"Maybe they couldn't trace you. You don't look the same now. They wouldn't even know you."

She moved up to him, put her hands on his shoulders. "Jess,

I said this was my fight too, and it is, more than yours. I said I wanted to help and I'm going to, if I can. Who would have called for you? How would you have got in touch with Major Wood?"

He stepped back. "There isn't any more you can do. Wood's coming tomorrow morning. That'll be the end of it."

"Then it'll be all right."

"You can't stay here, with me, alone, in an empty house."

"I'm going to sleep in Pedro's cottage. I told my father where I was going to stay. He argued too, worse than you." She opened the door quickly and stepped out. "Goodnight," she said.

He said, "Wait, Mary," but she was gone already.

THURSDAY, JUNE 20

Mary came early on Thursday morning. She had brought eggs and coffee and small rolls. He hadn't needed her to wake him. There had been no sleep; the noises of the house settling and cooling, the looking forward to Thursday—the fear. She said, "I brought you breakfast. You didn't sleep much, did you? I would have brought you a mat to sleep on, but you would have wanted to send me home again."

"It doesn't matter. I couldn't have slept anyway."

"I know. Major Wood will be here soon. Eat your breakfast."

"What time is it?"

"After six. I never used to keep hours like this."

He had little stomach for food. He chewed on one of the rolls, drank the coffee, pushed the rest away. She picked up the things silently, not insisting that he eat, and took them away. He went back into the front of the house to look through the crack in the boarding. The street was quiet and empty still. It was beginning to get hot, this early; the sun was shining again, the air still heavy and thick with humidity. The minutes beat against his brain as they passed, slowly.

Yesterday he had looked ahead no farther than today. Now, he looked ahead no farther than the arrival of Major Wood. Wood's arrival meant nothing, though. Whatever could have been done must have been done already. If Senator Arias were to be thwarted, if the Huk coup were to be averted, the battle lines must have been drawn already. He told himself that, but nothing would stop his heart from pounding, or lessen the urgency of the waiting.

He heard Mary come in again through the back door. He turned to go and meet her. "What time did Wood say he'd be here?" he asked her nervously.

"Before eight, he said. He must be on his way already. It's not yet time."

"How will he find the place? Did you tell him how to get here?"

"I told him Alejandro VI Street, the house of Mrs. Cardeñas. He'll have to ask."

"Do you think he'll be able to find it? Maybe he won't."

"I think so. There wasn't anything more I could tell him. There aren't any numbers. Everybody knows the Cardeñas house. He'll just ask someone."

There was the sound of a car in the street. He said, "Wait, maybe that's him now." He rushed back to the *sala* to look through the window. It wasn't Wood, though. When he got to the window the car was gone, the street empty. He turned wearily and shook his head. "Nobody there."

"It isn't time yet," she said. "Come on, sit down. You haven't had any sleep, you've been on the run for how long? You'll just wreck yourself. He won't come any faster for your pacing the floor and running to the window."

They sat down on the bottom step of the stairway again. He got up quickly though, and went back to the window to watch. She followed him back. "I know," he said. "I know it doesn't do any good. I just can't help it. Maybe he'll be coming to the back like we did? Which way did you tell him?"

"It's easier to find from Alejandro VI Street, the front. That's the way I told him. There isn't any reason for him to hide."

"No, of course not." He looked at his watch. It was ruined. It had stopped at 10:40. Was that the time he had first gone into the rice paddies, he wondered indifferently, or the time he had first walked into the stream near Paco Point? He didn't care. It must be time now for Wood to be here. All the alternatives began to rise involuntarily in his mind. Perhaps he'd just been talking, to pacify Mary, without really intending to come. Or perhaps he hadn't been able to do anything, or couldn't come. Or maybe even—no, the Huks couldn't have moved up their schedule. They were tied to Friday too. Tomorrow. He said, "Mary, do you know what time it is? Do you have a watch? Go and see, will you?" Something must have gone wrong.

She smiled and went quickly toward the kitchen. He stood listening to her footsteps on the bare wood floor, to the sound of the door closing behind her, without noticing for a moment the sound of the car on the street outside. He realized only after it had stopped that it had been, and he whirled to look through the window again. The car had stopped on the other side of the street, across from the house.

It was Paul Wood, finally. He looked like any casual tourist as he got out of the car, big in his loud sport shirt. He looked up frowning at the Cardeñas house and then walked across the street and opened the gate. Jess went quickly to the door. It unlocked from the inside. He opened it, standing behind it, before Wood could knock. "Come on in, Paul," he said softly. Wood stepped in-

side and he closed the door behind him.

"Well, Jess, what've you got yourself into?" he said cheerfully.

"You're late," Jess said tensely. "What took you so long?"

"Am I? The traffic, I guess. Never knew there were so many busses and cars between San Angelo and Manila."

"Yeah, a lot of traffic. This is a real mess, Paul. Did she tell you?"

"Yes, she—" They looked up. Mary was coming in.

"Eight-twenty, Jess," she said. "Oh, I didn't know—Is this Major Wood? You've come already."

"Yuo must be the girl that called me."

"Yes, Mary Montserrat. You two look like twins."

"Both Black Irishmen," he grinned.

"What have you been able to do, Paul?" Jess broke in impatiently. "Is everything all right now?"

Paul turned back to him, instantly serious. "Not yet, Jess. It's not as simple as that. On the basis of your story alone—you know they're after you. I don't mean the Huks; the constabulary, the government."

"I know. I saw the papers yesterday."

"It's worse today. They just have the news of the shootings here in San Angelo Tuesday night."

"But they were shooting at me!"

"That isn't the way they've got it. Anyway, we can't do anything about that now. But you see how it is. Your statement wouldn't be worth much."

"You haven't been able to do anything, then," Jess said dejectedly.

"Yes, I have, and we're going to do a lot more. The Army's been put on alert. After all, I'm an adviser in the Defense Department. I don't have to use your name to get that done. That doesn't help too much. We don't know where the Huks will strike; the Intelligence is very poor."

"Non-existent, apparently."

"Not non-existent. They do better than you think. But not nearly good enough, especially on this. We've doubled the guard, sent more men to Paco Point."

"The President's still going to Paco Point!"

"Still going. Senator Arias is a tremendously powerful man. The President can't afford to turn down the invitation. He wouldn't, anyway, not on your say-so. You called Secretary Chavez, didn't you? You know what reaction you got from him. That was before. Think how they feel now, with the papers screaming about an American amok."

"The Huks deserve the country," Jess said disgustedly.

"That's silly."

"What are you going to do, then?" he asked heatedly. "Let the President walk into the trap? They'll have him there, there'll be uprisings all over the country,

you don't even know where, your intelligence can't tell you. One day and it will be all over."

Wood held out a pacifying hand. "Take it easy. It won't do any good to get excited. It isn't my Intelligence. I get kind of mad at them myself sometimes. That's just the way it is. But put yourself in their place. Who would you believe, Senator Arias —or Jess Butler, a guy on the run?"

"Sure," Jess said wearily.

"Now the warehouse there at Paco Point. Miss Montserrat here said you said you'd seen it full of arms and ammunition."

"Yes, I could see from where I was. Cases and cases stamped with red stars. Some with a funny mark that looked like a bow and arrow. I couldn't tell for sure."

"They're both Russian marks. They don't use the hammer and sickle, like everybody thinks. But the Secret Service went over that bodega Tuesday. There wasn't anything like that in it. Just a few cases of mine machinery."

"I know," Jess said impatiently. "I told Chavez they were trucking it off. Of course. It isn't any good to them there. That's how I happened to see the bodega open. They were loading the trucks then."

"So that doesn't leave any proof."

"Senator Arias said there was more coming. That must have been Tuesday night or last night. It must still be there. They wouldn't take a chance on trucking it out tonight. Tomorrow they can do it free and easy."

"That's what I'm counting on, that it is there now. I'm going on to Paco Point. The Secret Service men are coming up there again today, to meet the President when he arrives tomorrow. This has to be handled delicately. Arias is president of the Medoc Mining Company too."

"Sure."

"I can't just telegraph up there for them to search the bodega again. He'd just say no, raise a racket. I can arrange that though, on the quiet, when I get up there. I'll have it searched. Without his knowing. We'll be ready for what we find, and for your sake I hope we find something. If we do, we'll throw them off balance. We'll upset their time table, keep the President on his yacht, grab hold of Arias and his dirty gang."

"If you don't? They might somehow have got this load out already, too. They'd try if they possibly could."

"I'll be there, at least. It won't be the same as if no one's expecting it. The Army's alerted too, I told you that. It'll work out all right, still."

"I hope so."

"It will. Now the bodega's where? How far away from the main building?"

"About three miles down the beach. At the old pier, the Medoc pier. They've rebuilt that."

"Wait, I'll just run out to the

car and get a map. I want to see how the roads go there, if any show. You went down the beach? You didn't go by road?"

"Down the beach."

"Just a minute." He went out to the door. Jess walked impatiently to the window, watched him crossing the street to the car. Thank God for Paul Wood, he thought. Somebody who could realize the danger.

He saw the gate on the other side of the street open. He watched it move, frozen suddenly to the window, knowing instantly with terrible clarity what was going to happen, powerless in the split second interval to prevent it.

Paul Wood stood transfixed as though supported for an instant by the hail of bullets, stopped motionless in midstep. Machine gun bullets. Ten, fifteen, twenty of them. He whirled and fell. Mary ran up to Jess. He couldn't take his eyes away from the window, staring with a horrible, hideous fascination, still not quite understanding the meaning of the scene.

The machine gun stopped as suddenly as it had begun. The gate closed. There was nothing but silence now, silence to make the ears ache after the noise. Mary started to run to the door to go out. He caught her just in time, held her back. "Come back," he said. "Don't go out there!" He went back to the window. No one in the whole street was going out. Paul Wood lay there alone in the middle of the muddy street and no one dared approach him.

He turned finally, wearily, walked slowly to the stairway and sat down. There was nothing to be impatient about now, nothing to wait for. He put his head down in his hands, thinking, Oh, God, Paul Wood! Why, why? They weren't after him, they couldn't know that he knew anything about what was going on. They couldn't be shooting all Americans. Paul looked like any other casual American off on a holiday. Like any other casual American—like Jess Butler. What had Mary said? "You look like twins." They didn't really, they looked nothing at all alike, except that they were both big men with black hair, wearing loud polo shirts. Most orientals looked alike to him; Americans looked pretty much alike to orientals.

It was as simple as that. His stomach turned in sick revulsion. They'd tracked him as far as this house, then, somehow. They'd waited for him to come out, but Paul had come out first. The Desbarros, the waitress and the owner at the Good Luck Panciteria, now Paul. He had left a bloody trail all the way down Central Luzon and it hadn't come to anything. Tomorrow it would be all over, for the country and for him too.

He felt Mary's hand on his shoulder. "We can't just leave him there," she said.

"There isn't anything we can do for him. He'll have to stay

until somebody else picks him up."

"But Jess, why did they shoot him?"

"Because they thought he was Jess Butler, I guess."

She was silent a moment. "Oh, Jess, yes, they would. They would think it was you. They were waiting for you, weren't they? But how did they know you were here?"

"I don't know. They have ways. Somebody saw us, I guess. You don't know who's with them, voluntarily or through fear. Maybe Pedro."

"Oh, no," she cried. "Not Pedro. I know. He'd die first."

"Maybe not. Maybe somebody else. What does it matter now?"

"What will you do, then?"

"What can I do? Wood was the last chance. Everything depended on him. The Army's alerted, but what does that mean? Nothing, without what he'd have been able to do at Paco Point."

"I could go and call somebody else."

"I don't know who to call. I tried the Secretary of Defense and the American Embassy already. If I were in Manila, where I could go around—but I couldn't even do that. Not with them waiting to pounce on me for Senator Arias' charges."

"We'll try to think of something."

"All I can think of is Senator Arias sitting there so arrogant and sure." He clenched his fists in fury. "Telling me 'the people will be on the winning side;' and he'll be the winner." He sprang up in desperate impatience and walked across the room to look through the window again at Paul Wood. He gripped the window sill in violent, uncontrollable anger. Desbarro, helping him and paying with his life. Paul Wood, lying in the road, dead. His own life. Running through rivers and muck and rice paddies, shot at and chased. He gritted his teeth and started toward the door. He was sure to die anyway, but he'd make them pay too.

Mary screamed and ran to him. "Where are you going?"

"To get Paul's car. I'm going back to Paco Point."

She caught his arm, held him. "You can't. You can't."

He flung her off and opened the door. "I can. They'll get me, but I'll get some of them. Go on back to Pedro. Have him take you home."

She caught at his arm again, pulling him desperately. "You haven't even got the keys. You won't get half a mile."

He turned back to her for a moment. "I'll get the keys from his pocket. They've gone by now. He's dead—I'm dead, they think. At least they won't expect me to be travelling north."

"But someone might still be there. Someone might see. They'd know as soon as they saw you with him. They'd know they'd got the wrong man."

"That's a chance I'll have to take."

"Wait until dark then."

"I can't wait. There isn't time for that. Someone will have taken him away by then, anyway. With the keys."

"I'll go, then."

"Go on home. You can't do anything."

"I can. I'll go out to get the keys."

"No," he said roughly. "Are you crazy? Let them see you coming straight from this house to his body? You're not going. Even if you got the keys I'd still have to go and get the car."

"No, wait. Wait, Jess. If I'd be crazy, how much more you, to go out to his body? I'll go out the back way, around and up the street as though I were just coming. Anybody would stop at a body like that. That's natural. I'll get the keys. As soon as I can I'll drive the car off, around to the back here again. I can drive, really." She looked up at him anxiously. "If you are going back to Paco Point, all right. I can't stop you. But there's no use taking a chance here, where you might not get to the end of the block; or showing yourself, letting them know you're still alive."

"I can't put you in that danger."

"It's not dangerous for me. They won't connect me with you, just seeing me walking up the street. I'm going, Jess."

He stood thinking. It was the best way. "All right," he said reluctantly. He followed her to the kitchen door. "Watch. Be careful. If you get any indication that there's something wrong, don't go near him. Just duck into one of the gates like you were visiting someone."

"I will."

He watched her go out the back gate. He shouldn't have let her go, he thought. He started to call out but she was gone already. Reason told him that it was much the best way. There wouldn't be anyone waiting now, he was sure. But if he went himself, and someone in one of the houses saw him —they had ways of getting the information. They'd proved that already. They'd learn he was still alive, be waiting for him.

But what would he do anyway, if he got to Paco Point? He couldn't arrive there in broad daylight. He couldn't even go near the place. His hand fastened grimly on the pistol he'd gotten from the American. They'd know he'd been there, at least. One for Senator Arias, somehow. Blast that obscene face to bloody bits.

He went back hastily to the front window. Mary was not in sight yet. He looked anxiously at the street, pressing his face against the boards. No one had come out to Paul's body yet, but it had been only—how long?—twenty minutes. All the houses he could see were silent, their gates closed. Was someone waiting behind, still waiting to see who would come out of

the Cardeñas house? Were they waiting for the girl that they knew was with him? Did they realize already their mistake, were they waiting for him? His throat was so tight he could barely breathe. His eyes swept the street, back and forth, watching the closed gates in the stone walls, waiting for one to open, again.

Suddenly he could see Mary. She was on the opposite side of the street, walking causally. Why was she there, on that side, where any moment a gate might open? It didn't matter, one side or the other. Better on that side, even. If they were watching, they'd be watching this side. She was walking easily, as if she were going to town. She stopped short and cried out, as if she had just seen the body. She ran to it and bent over it. He could see her hand go quickly into the pocket, then out, clenching the keys. He waited, an eternity, while she bent over the body. The silence seemed a physical, tangible force. The gate, would it open? Had anyone seen her get the keys? Nothing happened. She straightened up, looked around desperately, as though for help. Now that one had dared to stop, others were coming out of the houses. Now the gates did open, but not the one that had opened before. The street was full of people, suddenly, crowding around Wood's body. Men, women, gesticulating, talking, bending over. She stayed in the crowd at first, talking too, explaining how she had found him. Then he saw her gradually moving out to the edge of the circle. Quickly, while no one noticed, she got in the car.

Abruptly the car started. Now the gate, the last closed gate. It didn't open. There was no one there. The car shot off. People looked up, briefly. Someone called out. The car was gone. They went back to the body. He turned away from the window and went quickly to the back to meet her. His shirt was soaking wet from sweat, he realized. There was the sound of the car, the gate opened, she was there. He fought an impulse to go and meet her. She ran up the path, into the kitchen.

He put his arms around her and pulled her close to him. "Oh, Mary, I thought you—why did I let you go?"

"It was right for me to go. I got the keys. I got the keys. Here."

"Where is the car?"

"Just outside. There."

He stepped back from her. "I'd better go then."

Her face was twisted with anxiety. "What will you do now, Jess?"

"I don't know yet. I'll see when I get there. I have half a plan in mind—I don't know if it'll work out."

"Wouldn't it be better to wait?" she pleaded. "We can think of something."

"No, I've got to go. I don't know what I'll run into on the way up there, how long it'll take

me to get there. If someone recognizes me—"

"Oh, Jess, be careful. Go along the back ways. Don't go down the main road."

"I'll stay on the back streets until I get out of town. Then I'll have to get on the main road. There isn't any other."

She caught her breath, but she looked steadily at him. "Don't forget, Jess. You said you'd come and take me out, after. Will you?"

He hugged her again, swiftly, briefly. "I promise. I'll meet you, here, tomorrow."

"I'll wait for you," she said softly. He turned quickly and went out without looking back. The car was just at the gate. He stopped momentarily to look out, up and down the street, then darted into the car. It started quickly and he swung out and up the street, sitting low in the seat, crouching unconsciously against the possibility of shots. At the intersection he cut over and headed north. He thought briefly of Mary waiting. Waiting tomorrow for him. If he didn't come she'd know by then and understand. And most likely he wouldn't come. He had the obstacles of a hundred and fifty kilometers through their country, tracked by Huks and police alike, the impossibility of going into Paco Point. What could he do? What could he accomplish by going there? He had on his side only the slim hope that in Paul's car, going north, he wouldn't be as easy to spot as he'd been on train and bus coming south. That and a wild, mad, impossible scheme that didn't even bear thinking about too much. Better anyway to be there, trying to do something, than to be holed up in the Cardeñas house, waiting for them to come.

He was on the northern edge of town already. He turned down a narrow winding dirt road and came out onto the main highway north. He pressed on the accelerator, gaining speed. Not too fast, though. Policemen here make a living out of running down speeders. He hesitated only a moment at the road that turned off to Clark Field. Too late to take a chance on them. With official charges against him they couldn't do anything but turn him over to the Philippine authorities.

He spurted on, mind holding the road with grim determination, shutting everything else out but the idea of getting there, getting there. Traffic was heavy, as Paul had said, in both directions. He had to slow down, to wait for opportunities to pass the cars ahead of him, holding his hand over his face against the oncoming cars, then moving to pass, quickly, ahead.

He was at Pamplona, now. He thought of the plaza where he had gotten on the bus—yesterday morning? The highway was the main street through Pamplona; he swung off to avoid it, onto a narrow ancient street, slowing

down sharply on its rutted surface, then over again and on through the town, back onto the main highway.

San Angelo and Pamplona were behind him. He tried to count in his mind the towns still to come, trying desperately to visualize the road, the country. Nothing now for sixty kilometers, then Florida, Pelayo, Mankaro. That was the worst sixty kilometers, barren, poor country, much untilled even before the trouble, almost all abandoned now. He squared his jaw. A province to get through quickly, any time.

So far, nothing. No one after him, no one recognizing him. He might be able to make it, but he had just begun. Thirty, forty kilometers out of a hundred and fifty. The traffic was thinning out. Fewer cars heading for Manila, fewer passengers from this country for the busses. The road changed abruptly as one province ended and another began. No more smooth concrete; prewar asphalt now, uneven and pocked with holes. Slower going still. He passed through a group of men, some standing indifferently, some lazily tamping dirt into the holes. He grimaced at the futility of filling the holes with dirt that the next day's rain would wash out —or of buying these men's votes with road work, for an election that might never take place.

There were fewer signs of people, and now none, the land stretching idle and uncultivated on either side of the winding road. It was ugly land, rough and wild, grown over with coarse grass and in the distance mountainous, with sheer granite cliffs showing gray and raw amid the green of the stunted trees. Huk country. Ambush country. He thought of President Quezon's widow, ambushed and murdered in Tayabas. A dozen Americans, caught on lonely roads like this. He gripped the steering wheel, pressing the car as fast as the sharp curves and rough road would allow. But this was still the smallest of his problems, he thought.

He braced himself for another right angle curve, sharp, blind, the land rising on both sides to cut off the view ahead. He swept around it, tires screeching. Suddenly he realized there was a road block ahead. Barbed wire barricades jutting from the banks on each side of the road. He slammed on the brakes, felt the car swerve at the impact. He looked around hastily. The banks rose steeply on each side of the narrow road. No chance to turn around. Back out—could he back out, back around the curve? Too late, they were out, guns fixed on him.

Not Huks. These men had on uniforms. Army. No, Constabulary. It didn't matter. Either side, he was caught now. They beckoned to him with their arms. He drove ahead unwillingly, stopped at the first barbed wire barrier. There was a sign, "Det. A, 74th

Company, Philippine Constabulary" and another, "STOP! Road Check." Set out here in the middle of nowhere to guard the road. He hadn't thought of that.

His mind raced for a way to get out of this. There were three barriers, the first and the last from this side, the middle one from the other side, barely giving the driver room to make an "S" through them. Impossible to do anything but crawl through them. A soldier approached the car, frowning, holding a rifle ready. He gripped the pistol at his waist and waited. The soldier growled, "You're going too fast there. Didn't you see the sign?"

God, speed limits! They didn't know who he was, then. He forced himself to speak steadily. He said, "Sorry, I didn't see it." He tried to smile.

The soldier didn't smile back. "Where's your Residence Certificate?" he barked.

He couldn't show his Residence Certificate. Not with his name blazed in all the papers, with these constabulary undoubtedly notified to watch for him. But that was all they checked. That was supposed to weed out the Huks. Even if Huks could get Residence Certificates as easy as anyone. Even if they had too much sense to come through Road Checks anyway. "I don't have a Residence Certificate. I— I'm a tourist. I just arrived in the Philippines. I'm not supposed to have one."

"You got no Residence Certificate?" the soldier snarled suspiciously. Another soldier moved up behind him and stood fingering his rifle.

"I told you. I'm just a tourist. I'm not supposed to have one."

"Move your car out of the way, on over to the side of the road."

"What for?" Jess yelled, making his voice rise in indignation. "You know damned well I'm not a Huk. I've got to get out of here. I'm in a hurry."

"We stop everybody that doesn't have a Residence Certificate. That's the order," the soldier said sullenly. "You wait until the lieutenant comes."

"When will that be?" He wouldn't have a chance if the lieutenant came. He'd be bound to know.

"I don't know," the soldier said. "Maybe this afternoon."

"You expect me to wait here until this afternoon?" he said furiously. The soldier didn't answer. He turned his back and he and the other soldier went to talk with a third on the other side of the road. Jess sat watching them; they looked now and then at him, then talked again. What were they talking about? They kept looking over at him. Did they realize now who he was? He looked about, frantically. Three barbed wire barriers ahead, more soldiers beyond that. No getting through there. Leave the car, head for the open country? The banks were too steep; he'd

never make it.

The third soldier was coming over to the car now, the other two standing, watching. This was it. His hand tightened on the pistol. "How 'do," the soldier said. He leaned up against the car. Jess didn't say anything. The soldier went on, pleasantly, "You have no Residence Certificate?"

"I told the other soldier—I'm not supposed to have."

"You are an American?" Jess nodded. The soldier fingered the window sill, craned his head to look in the back seat. Jess braced himself. What would the soldier do now? The soldier said, "Your car is very nice." Jess waited, warily, not saying anything. "Very expensive, these Chryslers, no?" Jess shrugged. The soldier went on, not looking at Jess. "You know, sir, we are just poor soldiers. We got only little salary in Constabulary. Not even enough to have money for beer."

Jess had to hold himself suddenly to keep from laughing, yelling. The tension seemed to explode inside him. It was a touch. That's what they were plotting at the side of the road, looking, looking, looking at him. The delicate notorious way of the Constabulary, sniffing for bribes, asking for money. Put out here to guard the people and robbing them instead.

He forced himself to go slowly, be serious, yet pleasant. One couldn't be too direct. One spoke instead of buying the boys beers, although where they would get beer in this empty country he didn't know. He said, "Yeah, that's too bad. It's a hot day, too—a good day to drink beer."

The soldier said, "Yes, sir."

Then as if the thought had just occurred to him Jess said, "Say, why don't you go and have a beer. I like to help you guys out when I can." I'd like to help you cut your throat, he thought. The soldier waited expectantly as he drew out his billfold. The money was still damp. He handed him a five peso bill. "Here, get yourself several beers."

The soldier looked at the money but didn't touch it. He frowned, then began again, obsequiously, "You know, sir, my buddies—they got no money for beer either."

There was no use getting mad. If he did, if he refused, he'd be here all day. The soldier knew that too. He waited. What he didn't know was how desperately important it was to get out of here, now, before the day was gone and the chase was over. He didn't know how high a price he could set. Jess took out two more five peso bills. "You'd better get your buddies some beer too," he said.

The soldier folded the three bills and walked back over to his two companions. They waved cheerfully at Jess. The soldier came back smiling. "You are an American? Got no guns, ammunition?"

"No."

"Okay, sir, go ahead." He waved him on. Jess started to weave through the barricade. Behind him the soldiers were laughing, calling, "Goodbye, sir. Thank you for the beer. Have a nice trip." Out of the barricade he shot ahead, pressing his foot viciously on the accelerator. Have a nice trip. Sure, a great little vacation, he thought.

He had wasted an hour or more in the minuet-like movements of the bribe payment. An hour for them to catch up with him, starting from San Angelo, or to send word ahead to meet him at Florida or Pelayo. He wondered if there were more Road Checks, more constabulary to be paid off, more delays. Worse—at the next one they might know, might be looking for him, for an American who'd shot a woman at Paco Point. Murder, according to Senator Arias. He looked involuntarily behind him, but there was nothing to see; the road itself ended instantly, invisible behind a sharp curve.

The road changed abruptly. He had entered a new province, better represented in Congress, presumably. It was concrete, crooked still but better than what he had left. He looked up at the sun, trying to estimate the time. After ten; eleven o'clock perhaps. He couldn't afford any more delays. As it was, the margin was thin. He didn't want to arrive at Paco Point before night fall, but the trip from Mankaro there would take half the afternoon. More. He'd have to stop, leave the car long before the Point, and strike out again across country, out of sight from the road.

And he was not even near Mankaro yet. There were still the other towns, the other hurdles to pass, the long stretch of highway between here and there, where anything could happen. Where anyone could be waiting for him. He thought involuntarily of another world, another lifetime, a week ago, when he'd been an easy going guy who thought of nothing but building up a small future for himself, of a free, easy life, who had no worse problem than spare parts for an old bulldozer. So much that he'd taken for granted, that he'd thought he was entitled to just because he worked hard and hurt no one. Perhaps it was worth knowing that you had to fight for that, that it was worth fighting for; that sometimes it got beyond that, to the point of fighting for your very life.

He glanced at the kilometer post. He was approaching Florida now, three kilometers. There was little of Florida on the road; the village was over out of sight, bypassed when the new road came through. On the highway there was a school looking hot and steamy in the sun, its straggling trees, student planted in land that had once grown rice, years away from giving shade. Then ahead it became more populous, sud-

denly. He had forgotten this.

This point was a half-way mark, where busses stopped, people piled out, there were restaurants, gasoline stations, a rice mill. It was the place where they would be if they were waiting, where they could spot anyone, going north or south. There was no other way now, no cut-off around the settlement. He slowed down instinctively, then speeded up again. It was a short distance, actually, five hundred meters perhaps through all the people, past all the busses, the restaurants, gas stations where they might be waiting. A moment to pass all of them. He prayed that there were no busses turning on the road, no bull carts moving slowly, no people crossing to honk at and draw attention to himself.

He put his hand over his face, as though to shield it from the sun. He gripped the steering wheel tight, clenched his teeth. He was entering the area now. Five hundred meters. He had wanted to stop for gasoline, but there was no stopping here, exposed in the sun at these stations. He swerved to miss a naked child playing on the side of the road, stayed on the wrong side to miss a bus backing blindly into the road, swerved sharply back to avoid an oncoming car. Now, now, now, any minute—He was through. He swept onto the long bridge beyond the settlement, nothing on either side now but the stretches of the ugly river beneath.

He braked sharply. He'd have to stop again. It was a toll bridge. He could see the small toll house at the other end, a man standing outside ready to collect the fee. He looked behind him. There was no one following yet, to catch up when he stopped. He had no idea how much the toll fee was, twenty or thirty centavos, probably. He felt in his pocket for change. He had none. He was at the toll house. Hastily he took out his billfold, got out a peso, slowed enough to hand it to the collector, drove on. Behind him he could hear the driver shouting, "Wait, mister, your change." He wasn't waiting.

Another obstacle passed. He breathed heavily, free again for a moment. He reminded himself that he was going north, when they expected him to go south to Manila. That he was driving a car, when they expected him in busses or trains. But they had never missed for very long; the changes he'd made before had stopped them only momentarily. Perhaps they already knew; knew that Paul's car was not in Alejandro VI Street any more, had heard from someone who'd seen the car drive away from the back of the Cardeñas house. The Cardeñas house, where they'd shot a man coming out the front. The wrong man.

There was no way out of that, no possibility of turning back now. He thought of a foreman he'd had once, whose comment

on a difficult decision was "Well, damned if you do, damned if you don't." That's the way it was. Pelayo now, a somnolent village built around a stone church and a huge grassy square. The road cut sharply to go around the square. Instead of following it on around and out he drove out at the corner, down a side street, looking for a gasoline station. He had to have gasoline before he got to Paco Point. He didn't dare stop in Mankaro; this was the only other place.

The side street petered out. There was nothing to the town. He'd have to go back to the pump he'd seen on the main road, wait in the middle of town with the traffic passing. He had no choice. He cut sharply, backed and sawed to turn around, drove back to the square, then down to the single pump of the shabby gas station. No one appeared. He honked sharply. Finally a sleepy boy came out and looked at him without saying anything.

"Fill it up," he told the boy. He got out and went around to the trunk while the boy began to pump. It was a manual pump, slow going. No daytime electricity to run pumps in Pelayo. He opened the trunk; there were two five gallon jerry cans. Irish luck, he thought; I never would have got a container from this boy. One was all he needed. Like a lot of people Wood had carried the jerry cans for gas, for water, for long trips, emergencies. Both were empty. Paco Point wasn't a long trip. He carried one of them back to the boy and said, "Fill this up too." The boy went on pumping. A slow business.

He went into the small station to wait, out of sight of the road. There was coconut candy, homemade, messily wrapped in cellophane, on the counter. It was past lunch time already—when he had eaten a meal, a regular real, last? He slipped it into his pocket, picked up a package of cigarettes too and lit one, ignoring the "No Smoking" signs. It felt hot enough to blow the place up whether he was smoking or not.

The boy had finished filling the car. He was starting on the jerry can now. Jess drummed his fingers on the counter impatiently, then stopped suddenly, thinking of Senator Arias' fat fingers drumming on his desk. It was taking so long, too long. A jeepney drove up for gas. He turned his back quickly, but he would have to pass them eventually; they were between him and the car. The boy came in. "Seven forty-four," he said.

"Candy and cigarettes too," Jess told him. The boy was confused. He had to stop and add up the three figures. He couldn't wait for that. "Never mind," he said. "Here's nine pesos. Keep the change." He went out to the car quickly, ducking his head. He snapped the jerry can shut, put it in the front seat, and got in. The jeepney passengers looked

curiously at him. No one said anything.

The gravel under the wheels flew as he started off abruptly. Next stop Mankaro, then the Point. He looked up anxiously at the sun. He had forgotten to ask at the station what time it was. It didn't matter; there was no setting it back. He unwrapped the coconut candy with one hand and took a bite, but it was sticky and too sweet. His stomach rebelled at it. He spit it out and lit a cigarette instead.

In Mankaro of all places he could not go through the center of town. His hands tightened on the steering wheel as he thought of the plaza there, the provincial Fiscal's office where he had waited, where they had waited for him. Tomorrow would the President speak in that plaza? Would he be there, to dedicate the new market, to prate of peace and order? Would he, Jess, be alive to listen to it? There was only the rest of the afternoon and a night now, the desperate chance of making that possible.

He turned off at the first street. Mankaro was a small town. There was no getting lost in it. He turned again, followed the narrow winding street until he recognized the street he had driven over on Monday to get to the Point. He thought of the Desbarros again. I promised I'd come and see you when I came to Mankaro again, he thought. You aren't here and even if you were I couldn't stop this time. Every moment in this town, this small town where the news of an American traveled from one end of the other instantly, was dangerous.

He sped the short distance on the street to where the road turned off to Paco Point, then onto the open narrow road, rutted much worse now with the rains since Monday. He had to go much slower here. There were the same rice fields, the same planters rising now and then to wave. None of it had changed since Monday. But when he had passed, did the word go along the line, back into Mankaro? Would they be coming after him, from Mankaro, or out to meet him, from the Point? There was communication between the two places, obviously—radio. And probably from the Point to Huk headquarters elsewhere. The car bounced and heaved as he forced it over the ruts, sending showers of muddy water all over it. He wondered about his own car, but that would have disappeared, long ago.

There was a jeep ahead now. His heart began to beat faster. This was what he'd feared. A jeep from the Point—where else? If they'd had the word from Mankaro—or even if they hadn't. People who'd seen him, knew him, could recognize him. He took out the pistol, held it in his lap, ready.

But it wasn't from the Point. It was a jeepney, he realized as it came closer, a converted jeep,

loaded with passengers. He hadn't thought of that; of course there were occasional jeepneys. He'd taken one himself from about here. He had to slow down to keep from spattering mud on the passengers. They were abreast. He caught the driver's eye suddenly; he could see the sudden recognition in the driver's face. It was the one he had had before. He turned his head away quickly, shot his car ahead, ignoring the mud. It was too late; the driver had recognized him. Behind he heard him yell, "Hey."

It might not mean anything. He might be yelling about the splattered mud, or out of simple recognition. He couldn't wait to see. They'd learned from someone about the Desbarros; most likely from this driver. He glanced through the back window. The jeepney was going on. He had the interval at least before the jeepney could reach Mankaro. Forty-five minutes, maybe. Time enough, he hoped, to get to where he would leave the car, at least.

He was beyond the planted area now; the fields stretched out green and empty on either side. There was no one in sight. He had gone beyond the barrier of safety, beyond the point to which people would venture from their villages, lest they be caught at night on the road. The emptiness, the silence, were more ominous than ever, knowing what was ahead.

The sun was gone, too, the skies grey and overcast again. The green gave way in turn to the sandy, scrubby land; the seacoast was approaching. Panic hit him suddenly. He had gone too far, farther than he'd intended to go in the car. He had to leave the car. He mustn't be seen approaching in it. But not here, not an empty car here on the road. There was no place to leave it, no roads turning off to drive into, no cover in the scrub of the barren land adjoining the road. He forced his mind over the memory of the countryside. To the north, where the hills began—but that was too far.

Before he knew it he was at the small *barrio* he had noticed on the first day. He couldn't stop here. There would be people to see, to wonder, to carry the news. He should have waited until nightfall to come—but where? In the streets of Mankaro, where every hand was against him? There was no hiding place there. He couldn't risk waiting until the last minute and then being delayed, too long, either. He'd had no choice. He scanned the village quickly. He'd have to turn here, go back, leave the car farther behind. Again the village was empty, curiously empty and quiet. Were they waiting in fear inside the bamboo houses? Why did no one peer out, as they would at a car approaching, turning? There were no children scurrying about, no chickens, no pigs. There was no one at all here.

He thought of the empty beach

devoid of fishermen, the pier where no curious onlookers gathered. This *barrio* had been emptied, totally, leaving no one to get close to the Senator's operations. Now it was part of the ominous desolation that hung over the whole area. He turned sharply in between two houses, back into a cluster of trees behind. It would do as a hiding place, for the short time it was needed.

He got out quickly, listening for a moment. Was the village really abandoned? Perhaps they were just out at the rice fields. It would be time for them to be coming in. But there were no rice fields here. This was a village of fishermen, and empty. He reached for the gasoline can. It was heavy and awkward, but necessary.

He stood, out of sight at the corner of the house, watching the road until he was sure there were no cars in sight. He struck out quickly, across the road, into the rough ground on the other side. He had to leave the road now; he couldn't walk along it, vulnerable and conspicuous, a target for any car that passed. He must hurry. It would soon be dark, and it would be easy to be lost in the open, unmarked country. He shifted the gasoline can to his shoulder with a single abrupt motion, heedless of the sharp flood of pain in his side at the movement. He walked on without stopping, through the scrubby growth, forcing himself faster, looking back involuntarily.

He was out of sight of the road now. He kept his course parallel to it, pushing on. It was getting dark quickly, as he had known it would. He could hear the sound of the ocean in the distance now; it was the only sound anywhere. He was not far from the Point, then. He wondered where the road from the Medoc warehouse came out, trying to think of any side roads. There had been none; there wouldn't be, near Paco Point. Probably that road went past the old mine site and out at another place.

He could see the Point now, suddenly coming into view in the distance in the last light of the day. He shrank into the bushes, lowered the can and sat down on it. He could go no farther now until it was dark. He had no way of knowing whether they would be watching or not. Probably not; they had no reason to. But the Secret Service men were there, too, he remembered, to wait for the President, adding their open danger to the stealthy threat of the Senator's men.

He would have to wait here out of sight until it was completely dark, then move closer, wait again until it was time to move in. His heart began to pound in anticipation; suddenly he could feel the pulse straining in the veins of his arms, his forehead. In the distance he could see lights go on at the Villa, then

a car, its lights on, pausing for a moment until the gate opened—they'd had that fixed then; of course—and then hurrying in. He thought of the jeepney driver who had recognized him—had he told? Had this car set out to look for him? Would it report now that he had left the road, that he was somewhere here, waiting? He began to breathe faster. The car might be anyone, he told himself. There would be cars, naturally. There were people, guests, at the Point. It was still a social function—until tomorrow.

The car, or another, was coming out again; it had been only ten minutes. Instantly two others followed it. He watched their lights as they swept down and then out of sight. What did it mean? But he was safe here. They could look—where would they start? Unless they had found his car, realized that he would go off the road, head for the Point. It was dark now, though; they'd never find him.

But worried, they would watch and guard, where they hadn't needed to before, around the Villa, at the warehouse. They'd be expecting him. He got up impatiently and began to walk, orienting himself from the lights of the Villa. If it was that way, there was no changing it, nothing to do but go ahead. And it might not be that at all.

The sky was dark with clouds. It was difficult walking, impossible to see where the foot fell. He was past the Villa now; the land was rising already, rough and uneven, the beginning of the hills. He bent his course to skirt them, but they went all the way to the water. The undergrowth was thicker; he wanted to stay with it, but if he did he might miss the bodega altogether. The lights of the Villa were out of sight. The only course he could follow surely was the water line. He headed quickly toward it.

He stopped when he reached the beach. He wouldn't approach the bodega yet. He would wait until everything had settled quietly for the night. Then—

Every sound about him seemed a footstep as he waited. Someone coming down the beach, someone approaching from behind—there was no one, but the next sound, that might be. It was endless waiting, impossible to tell how long. Finally he got up, unable to wait any longer, and walked ahead, stepping carefully along the rocks.

He was almost at the pier before he could see it. He continued past it. In the darkness it was safer on the beach where he could walk quietly than in the bushes. The bodega was dark. He couldn't even see it yet, but he knew there were guards around, waiting to shoot, searchlights ready to flash on. He had gone as far as he dared go along the beach. He stepped back, quietly, infinitely cautious, barely breathing, into the bushes, moving so slowly that

the leaves brushing past him made no sound.

He could see the dark outlines of the bodega then. They would have men walking it at night, probably; inside, or outside the fence? His ears strained, listening. Where were they? It was silent; he could hear nothing. The guard's shelter, he remembered —that was on this side. Was there someone there? He couldn't take a chance on passing that. His mind raced over the possibilities —to go around the front to the other side. But no, there would be more men in front, wouldn't there, where the road was? And another guard's shelter on the other side, scanning the approaches from that end of the beach?

He couldn't tell. There was no way of knowing. Either approach was a desperate, impossible chance. He began to retrace his steps, then work silently over to the beach. Crawling along, in the dark, in the low growth that edged the beach here he was as safe as he could be anywhere near the bodega. He inched his way along, goaded by desperation. There was no other way, no other approach. He moved ahead, agonizingly conscious that at any moment now his elbow might fall on a dead branch that would break loudly, bring lights and shots and running men.

It was an eternity of crawling, pushing the awkward jerry can ahead of him, pausing to listen, moving again. He could hear voices suddenly. He was that close. The voices seemed oddly out of place in the night, but they had no reason to be silent, of course. He stopped and lay flat on the ground, not daring to move. There was more than one guard then, but he'd been sure of that. Were they patrolling regularly around the bodega? He strained to listen. There were no more voices. He couldn't tell where they had gone, how many there were. He began to move again. The undergrowth ended. He was at the edge of the cleared area outside the fence now. Now across the open sand to the fence.

He waited listening for the guards. There was a sudden flicker of light at the other end. Flashlight. How could he get any closer if they were making rounds flashing lights? He waited. There was no more light. He had to chance it, quickly. He began to move across the sand to the fence, standing now to move faster. There was no time for caution. Suddenly there was the flicker of light again, at this end now, the far corner. He stood in panic, unable to move, waiting for the light to flash on him. It was too late to move back. He dropped flat where he was. The guard was abreast of him now. How could he help but know what was outside the fence? Silently Jess reached for his pistol. If the light hit him, he'd have to shoot. That would bring the other guards; he'd have

failed before he'd begun.

The guard was passing—he'd missed him. Wait. He was turning, flashing, what had he seen? Then he was going on. Jess could hardly keep from gasping in relief. Now, to start. The guard was not making regular rounds, but when would he be back? He had to work fast, desperately fast, counting on the soft, damp, sandy earth. Even so it would take time, precious time. He was at the fence now, digging quickly. His hands struck the fence still, underneath the level of the sand—if they'd set the fence down, a foot, two feet beneath the sand, as they should have done—he hadn't thought of that. He'd never get through. He looked up. The fence was wire mesh, high, with barbed wire at the top, impossible to climb. He went on digging, ripping his fingernails, scraping his hands heedlessly in the sand. It was all right. The fence went only an inch or so beneath the surface. They'd set the posts in concrete, probably, and bothered no more about it—what could they expect to come under the fence? He dug desperately, piling the damp soil aside, burrowing, burrowing, conscious that the guards might come at any minute, pausing to take great gulps of air, then beginning again. It was taking so much, so long. He hadn't stopped to visualize how big the opening would have to be to let him through.

Was there any other way? If he opened the jerry can, sent the gasoline splashing? But the bodega was thirty feet at least inside the fence. That would be worthless. He went on digging. Now it was big enough, he thought. On his back he began to lower himself into it, ready to double up, emerge sitting up on the other side. There was a sudden sound. The guard was coming. He was caught, here, half way under the fence. Recklessly, heedlessly, he forced his body back through again to the outside, rolled away, lay still with desperate terror flooding him. If the guard were walking near the fence he couldn't fail to see the hole. If he had heard—or if he were using his flashlight—

There were two guards this time, walking together aimlessly, talking softly, swinging their flashlights on the ground at their feet, keeping close to the bodega. Jess watched in fascination the swing of the light back and forth across the ground until they went around the corner.

Now was the time, now, before they came again. No stopping to wonder if the bodega was empty or full, if explosives or non-inflammable guns were stacked inside next this wall. No time to worry about making noise or anything else but getting inside quickly, quickly. He ducked through the depression he had made under the fence, oblivious as it ripped brutally across his flesh, pulled the gasoline can after

him, stood up, ran toward the bodega, stumbled and almost fell as the gas can clattered down at the foundation of the building. He could hear the sudden noise of running feet as the guards came. He didn't wait. He dashed back to the fence, dove for the tunnel. The guards had heard the gas can hit the edge of the concrete floor. Their lights flashed along there first, picked out the can. They ran to it, bent over it. He stood on the outside of the fence watching. Now, now, now, forcing his hand steady on the pistol, missing, then hitting, not the guards, the gas can. Then beginning to run as the gasoline exploded, running as fast as he could run, as far as he could get before the second awful explosion, the warehouse.

As far as he was the force of it knocked him flat. The ground shook and the air was full of a terrible smell and the debris flying everywhere. The whole area was lit up by the flames. There was no time to wait, no time to watch in fascination. The others would be coming, people from the Villa, the Secret Service men, the guards. Now was the time. He had to get back to the Villa, get through, inside, in the disorder and confusion.

There was no road directly from the Villa to the warehouse. How would they come, by the beach, across the fields? Both, probably. He was safer in the fields, though. He rose quickly, dashed on around the spur of the hill coming down to the water, then up, up into the open country. There were new explosions behind him. He could see ahead already the lights of jeeps setting out across country, flashlights, men descending to the beach. Good. It was easy to avoid them. He ran on, stumbling, losing his footing in the rough ground, then stopping to wait, breathless, shrinking into the scrubby growth, turning to watch as the vehicles stopped, their occupants to go the rest of the way by foot. How many would be left at the Villa? No time to think about that, to think of anything but getting there now. He ran on ahead, guided by the Villa's lights. He was nearly there. Time to go more slowly now, cautiously, quietly, but still hurrying. There was only a short time in which he could depend on their attention being distracted.

He was near the fence now. This was easy, not a link fence like the warehouse. He waited outside, crouching down, searching anxiously to see where the people were. All the lights of the main building were on, but no one was in sight. At the end of the Point, at the cliff, where the land was highest, people were congregated trying to see what had happened, talking excitedly. The whole sky to the north was lit up.

There would never be a better time. He stood up, climbed

quickly over the fence, then down on the other side, waiting. No one came. He moved hastily along toward the Villa, ducking as he passed cottages, darting into bushes, waiting. He skirted around to come up at the side of the Villa. This was it now—The building was fully lit, the great *sala* blazing with light. No more shadows, no more protection of darkness, nothing to do but face it, expose himself to anyone inside. He gripped his pistol, wondering how many bullets were left.

He paused briefly at the terrace, looking in. There was no one in sight. Now, now. They'd be coming back from the cliff. Gamble everything on the one desperate chance that the proof, the real proof, the names, the places, enough to avert the blow tomorrow, would be there, in the Senator's office. He burst through, his eyes dazzled by the light. No one in sight. Swiftly across the polished floor of the *sala* to the office. The door was open. There was noise inside, somebody there. He couldn't turn back now; he went on, burst in. The Senator! Senator Arias hadn't been distracted by the explosion. He'd known what it meant. Papers were burning in the ashtray on the desk while he desperately crammed others in a briefcase.

He turned sharply as Jess entered and grabbed for the pistol on the desk, moving so fast, the fat old man. He fired. It went high. Jess ducked, firing at the Senator. The Senator fired again, straight through Jess' shoulder, a .45 bullet, built to knock men down. He went sprawling, raising his hand to fire again and again at Senator Arias. The Senator fell across the chair, then off onto the floor, the papers flying out of the briefcase.

People were running across the *sala* now, their footsteps loud as they reached the office. He couldn't hold out any longer. If they were the Senator's men, it was too late, he'd failed. The room was full of men suddenly, uniformed, civilian. Army men, the Secret Service. He said weakly, "The papers, the Huk papers. Don't let them get them." He tried to drag himself around, reaching out for the papers. The last thing he remembered was someone stepping over him, bending to pick them up. Khaki pants, the Army —he'd made it.

FRIDAY, JUNE 21

He woke to bright sunlight Friday morning, uncertain for a moment where he was or what had happened. He turned in the bed and cried out involuntarily at the pain in his shoulder. A young soldier came rushing in at the sound. "Anything, sir?" he asked.

It took Jess a moment to answer. Then, gritting his teeth he sat up in bed. "Where am I? In one of the cottages?"

"Yes, sir. You'd better lie down, sir."

"I'm getting up. I've got things to do."

"Sir, sir, you cannot get up." Jess ignored him and swung his feet over the edge of the bed. He had to brace himself to keep from falling at the wave of dizziness that hit him. He had only one arm to brace with; the other was securely taped to his side. The soldier ran out, frightened. Jess sat with his eyes closed, fighting the stabs of pain.

The soldier reappeared, with an older man. The man said sharply, "Here, what are you doing? Lie down again. You can't get up."

"I am up. Who are you?"

"I'm an army doctor."

"Is everything all right? What about Senator Arias? I've got to get up."

"Everything's all right. Senator Arias has been taken care of. Now lie down. Do you want to kill yourself?"

He was feeling better now, and he managed to grin at the doctor. "Look, doc, if I'm not dead now, nothing's going to kill me."

Someone in the doorway said, "No use trying to stop him, Doctor. He's had the Huks and the police both after him all week and they haven't managed." He came on into the room, a lean, wiry man with sparkling eyes. "How do you feel this morning, Butler?" he asked. "I'm Colonel Rosales. We owe a lot to you."

"Never mind," Jess said. He motioned to the soldier to help him and stood up. "What happened to Senator Arias? Those papers—Were they—?" He walked painfully over and began to try to wash his face with one hand.

"Senator Arias is dead, and no loss," Colonel Rosales said grimly. "We got enough information from the papers that were left to know where they planned to strike. We were able to get the news to the army by radio and it's over already. As soon as the news of Arias' death was broadcast, really, they knew it wasn't going to work. Thanks to you we were able to avert what would have been a bloody disaster for the country."

"What about the other men? Lopez, Cruz?"

"The Senator's assistants? We've got them too. This whole phase of the Huk problem is cleared up now."

"I can give you another phase," Jess said as he dried his face. "The officials in Mankaro."

"We're going to move in there too, clean all that out."

"Where are my clothes? Get them, will you?" he told the soldier. Then he turned back to Colonel Rosales. "I wonder why they didn't just send me packing as soon as they knew I was here Monday evening," he asked him.

"They couldn't afford to arouse any suspicion any place—and it would have, to throw a respectable American out at night in this country. Still Lopez says he wanted to, but even then they weren't sure how much you'd

seen, and the girl insisted on waiting until the Senator arrived."

'And when the Senator arrived they decided to burn me alive!"

"They knew you'd been at the bodega again. They couldn't let you go. But you couldn't just disappear either—too much depended on things going smoothly until today, and someone might have come looking for you. So they tried to make an accident of it."

'I think Senator Arias just liked the idea of burning somebody alive, too."

Colonel Rosales shrugged. "Maybe."

Jess went on. "But how did Arias ever think he'd get away with this plan?"

"He would have if it hadn't been for you. And actually he was in a wonderful spot to. He was a perfect tie-up with the Huks. They needed a man with his name and prestige for the front, if they were able to take over the government, to give it the semblance of legitimacy. And he needed their power and backing."

"But having the arms brought right in here—"

"This is a lonely, isolated part of the country, but still close to the main roads. No better place. The pier and the bodega passed for mining company operations; nobody ever got close enough to see anything else. We inspected it, you know."

"And didn't find anything."

"Nothing but a few pieces of perfectly legitimate mining machinery."

"I tried to tell them."

"I know. We're lucky you didn't give up trying."

"I couldn't—for my own sake." He was clumsily pulling the shirt around him.

"Here, let me help you," Colonel Rosales said quickly. "Where are you so determined to go this morning? I'm sure the President will want to see you and thank you personally when he arrives."

"Just tell him to see that I get the next road construction contract. And send somebody along with me to do the shooting this time, in case somebody along the way hasn't got the word yet."

He had wished for a time to know Mary when things were quiet and peaceful, when a man could look ahead, plan. Now he could, and he wasn't waiting any longer to begin. "I've got an urgent date in San Angelo," he told Colonel Rosales.

THE MISSING PIECE

by WILLIAM VANCE

The one small trouble in Joe Malone's life appeared again that afternoon just before the tuna clipper *Isabella* filled her hold. It was a twin-engined flying boat. Silver in color, it came over the horizon and flung itself straight at the *Isabella.*

Joe kept on with his fishing, a big and silent man, not given much to words. A man who kept to himself and trusted few people. But he was deeply troubled inside.

Anton Severich stood there in the stern grating beside him. He said, "Here she comes again, hey Joe?" Anton was a small dark man with inquisitive eyes. He'd joined the crew three voyages ago.

Joe didn't look at Anton and he didn't answer. Sweat streamed down his face as he stood in the stern grating, grunting each time he brought a yellowtail up on his strong barbless hook, tossed it over his shoulder where it landed with a satisfying chunk. He gave the pole an expert flip to disengage the hook and threw it back. Fishing had never been so good in the old country, he thought. But that was over with the arrival of the flying boat.

True, the flying boat always gave them information on tuna. But Joe felt that this was secondary.

This country was still a source of amazement to Malone. Since that day, when he'd changed his name from Malintovich to Malone, he'd felt like an American, but not quite. There was something missing. Something vital. At night when he pored over his history books, he felt it and tried to analyze it. The pattern was all neatly arranged except for that one missing piece.

The flying boat landed nearby. Big Mike took the dory over himself, rowing with full strong strokes, the sun flashing on his dripping oar blades. A man stepped from the plane to the dancing small boat. The flying boat took off and dwindled away into the distance.

The man in the dory with Big Mike was dressed in a neat gray business suit. He wore a gray Homburg and he had a small black mustache on his long upper lip. He stepped aboard in silence and without looking at any of them went to the captain's quarters. He carried a small briefcase in one hand. He disappeared from view and the others went on fishing, though the school was thinning out and the catches were slower.

Big Mike got the dory aboard and he shouted, "We'll pick up another run if we hurry. The airplane pilot said he saw a twenty-mile stretch of yellowtail."

Always the pilot of the flying boat left them word of fish. That

was supposed to be his purpose but Joe Malone didn't think so.

The weather rail rolled beneath a wave and water came up around Malone's strong legs. The fish were getting away from them now, the school passing on. From all his years of fishing for tuna, Joe Malone knew the tuna swam at eight to ten miles per hour and never stopped. He'd learned that if a tuna stopped moving it suffocated because of some pecularity of its gills.

"Good fishing, hey Joe?" Anton called.

Malone nodded and moved his big shoulders. He ran a wet and bloody hand through his curly black hair. His hand left a trace of blood on his forehead.

"Is through," he said in his broken voice. That was another reason he didn't talk much. He hadn't mastered the language too well. These third generation Savonians laughed at his accent. All but Martin. Martin didn't laugh at him. Martin had helped him come to this country. Joe thought about it again because he now had time to think. They were catching fish still, but the main body of fish had thinned down to nothing, almost.

Martin had even helped Joe pick an American name, Malone. "A good old American name," Martin had chuckled. "Right from the old sod."

Joe's name really was Malintovich but he didn't like to think about it now. He was the only Malintovich left.

Martin Tanovich was rich. He owned the cannery on Terminal Island and he had paid Joe's passage from the old country and got him the job on the *Isabella*. The *Isabella* was a co-operative boat and Joe made more money than he ever dreamed he could make.

Big Mike Contrella stopped behind Joe. He asked, "What you think, Joe?"

It made Joe swell with pride to know the captain consulted him about the prospects. He said, "I think mebbe so fish ain't so good no more."

Anton snorted. "What's he know about it?" he demanded.

Mike gave them both a wide, good-natured grin. "We ain't never had it so good since we got Joe," he said.

That small truth made Joe Malone feel good. He knew too, that it made Anton Severich feel bad. He didn't like that. He wanted to be friends with everyone. He said, "Anton is catch more fish than anyone on boat."

Big Mike shook his shaggy black head. "Not this time, Joe," he said cheerfully. "I been keeping tabs. You're still tops." He went on back along the gallery deck, calling, "Pull 'em in and button up. We're going home."

Joe called, "Why we go in now, Big Mike?" Joe always felt bad about returning to port. Since he'd had that trouble, back in the old country. That was a long time

ago but Joe still remembered. He didn't feel good except when he had the motion of the boat under his feet and the blue swells and horizon stretching away on all sides.

Mike stopped and turned, grinning. "You ain't got no woman, Joe."

Joe thought of the girl for whom the boat was named and wished he had a woman like her. Aloud he said, "What for we quit fishing?"

"Out of bait, Joe. And we're loaded. We go in now."

Joe put away his tackle and helped the others stow the fish as the *Isabella* plodded homeward. He kept telling himself that twenty-four hours was not long. But he knew it could be a lifetime. Once, it had been a lifetime. That's why he felt old at thirty at times. He didn't like the beach. He didn't trust people on the beach. They were all strangers.

The *Isabella* raised San Pedro at ten o'clock the next morning. The harbor was still shrouded in snowy wraiths of early morning fog as they went into the unloading dock. The fish started up at once and Big Mike sent Joe up to the scale house to check on the weighing.

Joe stood by as the fish came up on an endless belt to fall into little wooden carts. The weighman put down the weights and the carts were wheeled off to the thawing room. Joe liked this job. He liked to look at the once powerful gamey fish and speculate on which ones he might have caught. The city lay behind him and Joe didn't look in that direction. His eyes always lifted to the sea beyond the breakwater.

Isabella Contrella called, "Hello, Joe."

She was breath-takingly lovely as she came toward him. She worked in Martin's office and was Big Mike's only daughter. She had wavy black hair and sparkling dark eyes and a flashing smile. She had a dimple in each brown cheek.

Joe nodded gravely, stealing only a quick side glance at her soft young body curves. She put her small brown hands on the edge of the endless belt and above the clatter said, "Martin wants to see you, Joe." She looked down at the fish with an experienced eye. "You had a good trip."

He nodded again, not given to speech, watching her hands, wondering how they would feel lying within his own powerful big ones. "Fish is bite good," he said.

Her wide white smile turned to laughter and she moved around the belt to stand beside Joe. "The fish are biting good," she said. "Or well."

"The fish are biting good or well," he said haltingly.

She laughed again and patted his hand. "Don't keep Martin waiting," she warned and went on.

He watched her out of sight,

still feeling the touch of her hand. He leaned out the window and called to Big Mike, supervising the boat end of the unloading. "Martin send for me," he called.

Big Mike grinned, "Be right up." He called Anton and then leaped from the boat to the dock and climbed the stairs to the scale room. "Be off," he said.

Martin's office was like Martin, Joe thought, as he stood in ankle-deep carpeting with his cap in his hands. The two men at the desk rose as Joe stepped through the door and stood there. One was the man who had come from the flying boat. His briefcase, now bulging, lay on Martin's desk.

Martin was a big swarthy man with a black mustache and red lips. He always smiled. He was always dressed in fine suits and he laughed a lot. But he wasn't laughing now. He put his chin on his chest and said, "I'll be with you in a moment, Joe."

The man in the gray suit asked, "Tonight, then?"

Martin's headshake was irritable. "There's the dance tonight. Tomorrow evening."

The man in the gray suit looked unpleasant. "Very well, then. But if I'm late you'll be responsible."

Martin moved his well-tailored shoulders. "Can't be helped," he said.

The other moved toward the door.

"Take this with you," Martin said and lifted the briefcase.

"You keep it," the gray-suited man grinned unpleasantly and looked at Joe as he passed him.

Joe didn't like the man's eyes. They were small and deepset and had a look of unutterable cruelty in them. They reminded Joe of other men in his native land. He stirred uneasily and Martin looked at him as if seeing him for the first time.

"Come over here, Joe. Here by my desk."

Malone came to stand before the huge polished mahogany desk. Over Martin's head he could see the line of fishing boats, four abreast all the way to the end of the dock. He watched the gulls maneuvering gracefully over the clippers, and he heard their faint cries borne on the sea wind.

Martin lifted a long envelope from his desk and pulled out a paper. He smiled as he said, "You're all American now, Joe. Your naturalization papers are in this. You're one hundred percent American now."

Joe nodded and said, in his native tongue, "Thank you for all you've done for me."

Martin's smile disappeared and he said, "Talk American, Joe. Always talk American. This paper makes you an American, you know."

Joe nodded again, his brow furrowed. He would have liked to ask Martin why a little piece of paper made him an American. He wanted to tell Martin he wouldn't feel like an American until the

little piece that was missing fell into place. But he was afraid Martin wouldn't understand. He said, slowly, because he had to grope for the words, "For what you have do I'm ver' happy."

The buzzer on Martin's desk sounded. Martin pushed a button and leaned toward the little box. "Yes?"

Joe could hear Isabella's voice but he couldn't understand what she said.

Martin hurried, went around the desk, and his thigh brushed the briefcase to the floor. He said, "Wait right here, Joe." He ignored the briefcase. He opened the door and was gone.

Joe knelt beside the desk and lifted the leather case. The papers had scattered on the floor. There were pictures, too. Pictures taken from a great distance up in the air, because the glossy prints looked like relief maps. There were dozens of them. He looked at the pictures as he put them back into the brief case. He looked at the papers, too. He couldn't understand what they said, but a word here and there like nuclear and fissionable he remembered. When he raised to his full height and put the briefcase on the desk he was more disturbed than he'd been since he came to America.

Martin came back into the room. His eyes went from the floor to his desk and rested on the briefcase. He strode across the room and lifted the leather case and examined the lock. Without a word he opened his desk drawer and put the briefcase in it.

Martin sighed as he closed the desk drawer. He stood there for a moment with a faraway look in his eyes. Then he sighed again and picked up the envelope containing Joe's naturalization papers. He gave them to Joe. He said, "Okay, all-American boy, here's your papers."

Joe didn't like the sound of the words. Almost as if Martin was making fun of him. He remembered the judge who'd told him about the responsibilities of being an American. He remembered how everyone but the judge had laughed when he said, "I'll be good American. I'll fish good, too."

In the outer office, Isabella regarded him with her soft dark eyes. "Be sure and come to the dance tonight, Joe. You missed the last one."

He smiled at her with shyness. He avoided crowds when he could. But he wanted to see her and be near her. He wanted to go to the dance. Last time he'd sat on a bench across the street in the little park and watched the people come and go. He'd listened to the music. Just like they made in the old country. And every other dance was an old country dance. He said, shyly, "I come, Isabella."

The fog that had clung over Point Fermin the day long deepened, and a light offshore wind drove it into the new and old of

San Pedro. It swirled around the seven-story city hall and obscured the neon-lighted triangle above the red-brick YMCA building. From the breakwater the hoarse bellowing foghorn sounded like a lovelorn cachalot calling its mate. The clang-clang of ships' bells came plainly to Joe Malone, sitting on a bench across the park from Savonian Hall.

Outside, the hall was brightly lighted. The old ones, Joe knew, didn't want the young ones to wander out in the darkness. Through the windows he could see the dim lights. The music came through the fog-shrouded night, soft and sweet. He wished he was there but he knew he'd wander through the streets, thinking about this new thing, until tiredness drove him back to the *Isabella*.

Thinking of the tuna clipper brought thoughts of her namesake. Thoughts so powerful he could smell the familiar sweetness of her perfume. There was a rustling sound then and her soft hands were on his work-hardened ones. She said, "You promised to come, Joe. I've been saving the first dance."

He felt hot all over. His face burned and was cold, alternately. He desperately groped for words. "I want to come," he said.

"Silly, then why didn't you?"

He shook his head forlornly. "Too much people, Isabella. I don't like."

Her warm hand squeezed his and it was like pressure on his heart. "I know, Joe. You'll be all right. With me."

He felt he would. But there were those deep thoughts in his mind that he wanted someone to see. Someone who would not laugh. He asked, in his native tongue, "You remember our language?"

She shook her head. "I know it, Joe. From hearing the old folks. But I can't talk or understand it very well."

He said, "It's about this being an American. Martin tells me I'm American. But is he sure? This paper says so, but it must take more than a paper. I've not done something I should do." He stopped, waiting for her laughter.

She said, gravely, "You're an American, Joe. You've done everything you should do, I'm sure. Martin knows."

He was silent for awhile and the music changed from jazz to an old country song. A song for dancing.

She took his hand. "You'll like that, Joe. You must dance with me."

They danced one dance and Anton Severich took her. They left Joe alone and he wanted to be out in the open again. With the fog in his face and hearing the sounds of the sea. But Big Mike came over and put his arm around Joe's shoulder. Big Mike called out in a loud voice and the music stopped and the lights went up.

Big Mike looked at Joe fondly and held up his left hand and the murmur of voices died away.

On the edge of the room, Joe could see Isabella. She was talking to Anton Severich and Joe felt a tiny stab of jealousy.

"My friend Joe," Big Mike called out, "brings in most fish of all. He leads grand parade tonight."

There was a swell of voices then and deafening applause. Isabella came over and took his arm in both her hands and stood beside him, looking up at him, smiling her dazzling smile.

Joe felt his chest deepen and swell with the pride of it. He looked around the room at all the smiling, friendly faces. These men were all fishermen. Their fathers and grandfathers had been fishermen and their daughters would marry fishermen. But most of all they were Americans.

There was a flurry at the door and Martin came in, smiling and nodding and waving his hands. There was something about his entry that took away Joe's pride and happiness. Yet Martin had been so good to him, he felt guilty. He looked down at Isabella. Her face was grave and she was not smiling.

Martin went among the people, stopping here and there to talk and Joe was struck with the way he walked. It was almost as if he was of the other people. His walk was a swagger and there was a tilt to his head and shoulders that made Joe think of the arrogance of these other people. The ones that came after the war and told them where they would work, even if they had been fishermen all their lives and their fathers and grandfathers before them. And the ones that were left to fish were told how much fish they should catch each day. As if a man knew how many fish he would catch. A good fisherman always caught as many as he could. But there were some days when even a good fisherman would get no fish at all. And Martin reminded him of these.

Isabella pulled his arm.

He looked down at her and then as the music started, Joe led the grand parade.

Later that night on the boat, he thought about it again. He knew he should be truly happy because he'd led the grand parade and everyone recognized that he was the best fisherman on the west coast. But there was something wrong. If there was only someone he could talk to and tell all the strange thoughts that ran through his head.

Anton Severich came in and began removing his clothes. He was a short stocky man with the dark face of his race and a scar on his chin. He kept looking at Joe. "I guess you'll be happy tomorrow, eh Joe?"

Joe nodded.

Anton made a sound of disgust. "If Isabella went for me like she

goes for you, I wouldn't be wanting to go fishing," he said.

Joe looked puzzled. "What you mean go for me?"

Anton shook his head. "You're the dumbest Savonian I ever run across anywhere. And I've seen some beauts." He flipped out the light and crawled into his bunk.

Joe heard him thrash around and finally settle down and begin snoring. Anton was a peculiar fellow, he thought. He was smart, Joe knew. But he was always looking, prying and asking questions.

Joe worked happily all day, repairing the bait seine. They would sail at sundown. Not that it made a lot of difference about using the outgoing tide but they clung to the ways of the old ones. He knew there would be a full moon tonight. They would fill the bait tank in such fine sardine seining weather. The moonlight glinting on the silvery fish would show them where to drop the net. Joe whistled as he worked, a whistle that stopped in mid-note when the man in the gray suit came along the dock.

The man in the gray suit had his bulging briefcase in his hand. He came aboard, walking carefully across the cleated board that lay between the dock and the boat. He looked straight ahead and went to Big Mike's quarters.

Big Mike came out on deck a few minutes later. He looked at the sun over the Palos Verdes hills and said, "All right, boys, let's get underway."

Joe dropped the seine. He went over to Big Mike. "The pump for the bait tank, she don't work."

Big Mike frowned. "What's wrong with it, Joe?"

Joe said, "I'm not know," and shook his head.

Big Mike frowned again and muttered, "I'll have to look at it," and went forward.

Anton sidled up. "I saw you," he said in a low voice. "I saw you put something in the motor, Joe. Why?"

Joe put a blank look on his face. He was good at that. He moved his eyebrows and his shoulders. "What for you say that?" he asked.

Anton pursed his lips. "I don't get it, Joe. You crazy to go fishing and you do something like that." He grinned suddenly. "Maybe I'll tell Big Mike, hey Joe?"

"No, you not tell Big Mike," Joe said, shaking his head and clutching at Anton's arm. "You not tell him, Anton."

"Then tell me why you did it," Anton demanded.

"Is this," Joe said. He looked around. The deck was clear. He could hear the sound of Big Mike's hammer in the engine-room. His head swung around again in another swift look. His big fist lashed out and caught Anton on the jaw. The small man went sprawling. His head struck the deck bitt and he lay still.

Joe picked him up easily and walked down the galley deck and kicked open the door to his and

Anton's quarters. He carried Anton in and laid him on his bunk. He came out and closed the door. The deck was still clear. He went across, through the fast falling darkness, the gangplank swaying beneath his bulk. He walked up the dock, walking fast and feeling more sure of himself now.

There was a telephone booth at the end of the dock. Joe went in and pulled the door shut. He opened the telephone book and painfully looked for the number he wanted to call. It was hopeless. There were too many names, too many numbers. A sense of futility seized him as he thumbed through the pages, trying to remember his spelling.

He found the number under UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. He put a coin in the slot and dialed the number.

Sudden panic seized him. He didn't know what he would say. He didn't want to get Big Mike in trouble. But he was an American. He was on the verge of hanging up when he thought of that. He waited. Something made him wait.

A girl's voice said, "Immigration and Naturalization Service."

Joe said, "I'm Joe Malintovich and I got you something to tell."

"Immigration and Naturalization. Speak louder please."

"You got skipper?" Joe asked. "You got captain there? I want talk with head man."

"One moment please. I'll ring Mr. Gardner."

A man's voice said, "Gardner speaking."

Joe's panic threatened his voice. He said, "Mister, I tell you man is leaving on *Isabella* tonight, right away. I see papers in brief case, maps and things. This man is not American man."

Joe waited, then. He waited so long he was afraid the man had gone. He said, "You hear me, mister?"

"Yes, I heard you. I'm afraid I don't understand."

"What you do?" Joe asked, "this man is not good."

"Just a moment," the voice said. His voice came to Joe, lower but distinct. "Some nut on the phone, Al. Want to take it? Sounds like one of yours. Take it on three."

Another voice came over the telephone, speaking Joe's tongue.

Joe explained, more sure of himself now, talking rapidly, telling what he'd seen and what he expected.

Al said, "It's too bad, Joe. That's not our department. Why don't you call the Coast Guard? Just a moment and I'll give you the number." He gave Joe the number. "Give them the information you gave me."

Joe tried to remonstrate but the man hung up.

Joe dialed the number the Immigration man had given him. His phone call was a repetition of the first. "That's not our jurisdiction," the Coast Guard told Joe. "You'd better call the FBI.

Just a moment and I'll give you the number."

"But—but, I tell you. What I tell you? This is America—" Joe was so excited he became incoherent.

"You bet it is, buddy," the Coast Guard voice said. "That's why we got to take it easy, see? We can't go around grabbing people off like they do in some o' them countries, see? You call the FBI. They know what to do."

"Yes," Joe said. "Yes, thank you, yes."

He searched his pocket for another coin. He found it and reached for the slot. The door opened. Joe turned his head. Martin stood there. He was not smiling and his eyes glinted.

"Who you calling, Joe?" he asked in a soft voice. His tongue came out and touched his red lips.

Joe swallowed. "I call Isabella," he said. "I say goodbye."

Martin's voice was still soft. "Don't lie, Joe. I've been here for a few minutes."

Joe swallowed again and looked at Martin. He didn't see Martin take a gun from his pocket. It was only when the gun came up that Joe noticed. The look in Martin's eyes were recognizable to Joe. He plunged out of the phone booth and into Martin. The gun sounded, a muffled report. Joe had Martin's arms pinned when the dock policeman caromed around the corner.

Martin panted, "Get this maniac off me!"

The policeman's club came down with a hollow thunk. Joe saw a shower of stars and his senses reeled. He shouted, "Wait, please, wait." The club came down again and Joe lost his grasp on Martin and went to his knees. He struggled to hold Martin and the club dropped again and again. He made one last effort to speak before he fell with darkness coming in from all sides.

Joe struggled up out of the darkness. He wiped water from his face and looked down at the steel bracelets on his wrists. He looked up at the ring of faces around him. They all seemed cold and unfriendly.

The hardset mouth of the policeman said, "All right you dumb hunkey, get on your goddammed feet." The policeman yanked on the bracelet and brought Joe to his unsteady legs. He waved his club. "Move back, all of you, move back."

The crowd moved back. Joe stood there and he heard the familiar sound of the *Isabella's* diesel. In the light of the floodlight he saw the clipper move away from the dock, with Anton busy coiling the bowline. He took a step in that direction but the policeman yanked him up short.

"Come on," the policeman grated. "Here's the wagon now."

Joe shook off the policeman's grasp and ran to the edge of the dock. He didn't hesitate, but dove

headlong into the water. His shoulder struck a bit of floating jetsam and pain shot through his arm. He went down and down, pulling in toward the dock. He came up, gasping for breath and with pain, against a barnacle-encrusted piling. He hung there for a moment, listening to the shouts above him. He ducked under a brace and swam toward the end of the dock, feeling the slime of the pilings as he passed them. Footsteps thudded on the dock above and the swift beat of a powerful engine broke above the other sounds.

A searchlight from the police boat probed under the dock. The finger of light moved relentlessly toward Joe. He dived deep, kicking with strong strokes in the opposite direction. When he surfaced the light was toward the end of the dock. Joe swam as fast as he could toward the light. He dived again as it moved back toward him.

He swam underwater, bumping pilings and hurting his shoulder again. He stayed under until his lungs hurt. He came up again with the light in back of him. He came out from the dock, swam around the end of the pier, and across to the adjoining dock. He pulled himself up on the stern of a water taxi.

A man rose from the seat and said, "What the hell!"

Joe kept his hands down. He said, "I miss boat. *Isabella*. She there."

"So what?" the man asked in a rough voice. He'd been frightened and was now angry.

"I pay you to catch boat for me," Joe said. "I pay you good."

"Charter trip inside the breakwater is thirty bucks," the man said. "You got dough?"

"I got," Joe said and brought water-soaked bills out of his pocket and dropped them on the seat. "There's money. You take."

"This dough's wet." The man raised his head and looked at Joe. "What you doin' in the water?"

"I fall in," Joe said. "You take. I pay."

The man took the money and went over to the cockpit and flipped on a dashlight. He smoothed out the bills. He whistled, "Say, there's a hundred bucks here."

"You keep all," Joe said. "You keep all and take me my boat."

"Okay, okay, okay," said the water taxi operator in a more cheerful voice. "Let's go." The starter whined and the powerful motor roared. "Cast off for me, I'm not callin' my bowman on this deal."

Joe stepped up on the bow and kicked slack in the line. He flipped the half-hitches off and slid back down behind the operator. The boat moved out away from the dock toward the running lights of the *Isabella,* just rounding the breakwater to head up the coast.

They came alongside a half an hour later. Joe leaped from the water taxi to the gallery deck of

the *Isabella*. He went up the ladder to the semi-darkness of the pilot house.

Big Mike said, "Where you been, Joe?"

Joe said, "Almost miss trip. Okay now. I catch."

Big Mike grinned. "Got wet, huh? Better go down and get some coffee and dry clothes. We're gonna load our bait tank off Portugese Point."

Joe said, "Okay, Big Mike. I go."

He went down the ladder. Anton was waiting for him. He said, "You dumb Savonian, you. I ought t' stick you with a knife."

"Don't make trouble, Anton," Joe said.

Anton looked at Joe's hands. "Looks like you got trouble enough now," he said. "What happened?"

Joe shrugged. "I not know. What you do?"

"Come below," Anton said. "We'll see."

Anton appeared to know about handcuffs. He used a little steel thing and in a moment the handcuffs were off. Anton chuckled as he put the little steel thing away and the handcuffs in his pocket. "Feel better?"

Joe rubbed his wrists. "Yes, thank you, yes," he said and moved out on deck.

They seined off Portugese Point in the moonlight. Joe kept wondering what he could do about the man in the gray suit. He wanted to tell Anton about it but he was afraid. He was now afraid of everyone. These other people could reach across the sea for him. He felt it. He was puzzled about it, too. In the old country, a man minded his own business. But this —he sighed as they pulled in the seine and put out to sea.

The fishing was slow but steady as they worked south. They found the schools and Big Mike dipped sardines and chummed the waters. With the ocean alive with the powerful fish, Joe lost himself. He lost himself in the work he loved as he fished with his stubby pole and barbless hook. When other men doubled, putting their two poles together to bring in one fish, Joe would still fish alone, his tremendous muscles rippling and flowing with the efforts. His shoulder was sore but he still singled while the others doubled.

This fishing was something Joe Malone understood. The other was something from which he'd fled in terror. He was reminded of this at night, when the man in the gray suit came on deck, a silent and solitary figure, standing in the bow with his hands behind his back. And it was so strange. The others acted as though he was not aboard. All but Anton. But then, Anton was snoopy.

The second or third night out, Joe thought of something. While the man in the gray suit was on deck, Joe slipped into Big Mike's cabin, which the stranger occupied. He found the bulging briefcase. He picked up the briefcase

as though it held a time-bomb and slipped out of Mike's cabin and crept silently into the freezing hold and buried the briefcase under a layer of tuna. He came back feeling satisfied in part for the first time in days.

The next day the silver flying boat came over the horizon and sat down near the boat. The stranger in the gray suit appeared on deck and he was no longer impassive. His eyes blazed and he threw his hands over his head as he talked to Big Mike.

Big Mike called the crew together on the stern. He stood there anxiously looking down at them from the bridge. He said, "Our passenger has lost a briefcase. Do any of you know of it?"

Joe looked around and saw Anton looking at him with an amused gleam in his dark eyes.

"Speak up," said Big Mike. "Speak up. This is serious."

All their heads turned as two other flying boats came into view, steering straight for the clipper. These two flying boats were gray and they carried Coast Guard insignia. The silver flying boat began taxiing away, with its motors roaring urgently. One of the flying boats dipped down and a chatter of machine gun fire reached their ears and the blue water churned with the impact of bullets in front of the silver flying boat.

Joe looked around with mouth agape. He saw Anton bounding up the ladder with a big gun in his hand. The gray man was backed into the rail with his hands raised and then Anton herded him down the ladder as a big gray flying boat came alongside the clipper.

Anton grinned at Joe. "You can bring me that briefcase, friend Joe," he said.

Joe looked at Anton and then he looked at Big Mike.

Big Mike nodded. "Do it, Joe. Do as he says. Anton is FBI agent."

Joe went down into the freezing hold and got the briefcase. He brought it on deck and gave it to Anton.

Anton grinned. "You're a good fisherman, Joe," he said. "You're a good American too. I wish we had more like you."

A man with a white cap on his head pushed open a hatch on the flying boat. The dory was put over and Big Mike rowed Anton and the man in the gray suit over to the flying boat.

Big Mike came back alone. The three planes rose together in the air and headed toward the coast. Big Mike said, "That was a fine thing you did, Joe. Anton he tell me."

Joe looked at the three dwindling specks in the distance. He didn't understand what it all meant but Anton had said he was a good American. He said, "The man in the gray suit. He had bad eyes." He said it in his native tongue. Big Mike grinned, "Yes,

my friend," he said, also speaking as Joe. "Now, shall we fish?"

Joe grinned, suddenly happy. "Yes, Big Mike. The sooner we fill up the sooner we're back to San Pedro, hey?"

Big Mike had a wide smile on his face. "You've got no woman there, Joe, so what's your hurry? Or maybe you're keeping a secret from me?"

Joe knew the missing piece was in place now. He'd done something for his new country. Not much, he admitted to himself, but that was what had been missing all the time. He said, "Is no secret, Big Mike. I catch fish now." He threw out the short line, tensed his muscles and swung a struggling fish over his head. He could tell Isabella now. He knew she'd understand.

SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

BY ROE RICHMOND

"It's about time we call on the Honorable Dr. Haviland," Ed Cochran said, glancing at the watch on his muscular wrist. "Providing the young professor Tinsley has his lesson well learned."

Jack Tinsley looked up from the papers and charts on the writing desk and smiled. "Just ask me something about cosmic radiation, son." He sighed and leaned back in the chair. Late afternoon sun leveled rosy shafts across the hotel room, and outside its rays reddened myriad windows in the stone towers of Manhattan. Tinsley went on: "I've studied more in the last month than I did all through college and law school, Ed."

"I'm glad I'm dumb." Cochran paced the floor, a dark square-faced solidly built young man with the easy elastic stride of an athlete. "I'll take the straight assignments, Jack. You can have the fancy masquerade roles."

"I suppose that's what I get for looking intelligent." Tinsley stood up, stretched his long arms. He was taller and slimmer than the other, about the same age, with wavy brown hair and a keen aristocratic face.

Cochran grunted. "You still don't look like a scientist to me, chum. What do you know about this Englishman?"

"Not much," admitted Tinsley. "High rating in the field of nuclear science. Home life said to be unhappy. Himself a lonely eccentric type."

"Sure, you can't keep a woman contented talking about cosmic rays, protons, cyclotrons, and all that crap," scoffed Cochran.

Tinsley laughed and shook his head. "Cochran, you'll always have the mind of a fullback. Get out of that gaudy sports jacket and those slacks. We aren't going to Belmont or Jamaica; we're going to meet a learned colleague."

"I'm sick of dressing like a parish priest," grumbled Cochran, shedding the expensive jacket with reluctance. "I don't see why we should turn all our secrets over to England. And I don't see why we have to nurse-maid this guy from New York to Denver. He crossed the Atlantic on his own, didn't he?"

"You're a chronic complainer," Tinsley told him, straightening his own sober tie at the mirror. "Don't worry, Haviland won't be too glad to see us or require much nursing. He didn't want anybody to meet him, as a matter of fact."

"Well, it's been a relief to get down off those Rocky Mountains anyway," Cochran confessed. "A guy could go nuts up there. Nuts enough to turn into a physicist."

"Don't you appreciate anything about our great outdoor laboratory on Mt. Evans?"

"I like the balloons," Cochran said. "And that red-headed waitress in the Crest House. But to me the atom bomb is powerful enough as it is."

"But this new energy is going to be harnessed to worthwhile creative causes instead of destruction," said Tinsley, half-joking.

"Nuts," said Cochran. "The stuff's beginning to get you, kid. Better apply for a transfer before it's too late."

"And leave the Redhead to your foul clutches?" jeered Tinsley; and then all of a sudden he turned grave and somber. "There's only one transfer off this job, Ed."

Cochran eyed him with dark curiosity. "You're getting morbid, too. A little learning is indeed a dangerous thing."

Tinsley smiled and slipped into a conservative double-breasted coat. "Pretty good for you, Ed, quoting from the Bard."

Cochran was adjusting the shoulder-holster that held the automatic under his left arm. "I'm not so dumb, Jack. I just act that way so I won't get assignments like you get, chum."

* * * * *

The tall lean slightly-stooped ascetic-looking man paused in the hotel corridor and examined the number on a door: 2674. He was about to change his identity by

the simple process of crossing a threshold. It was not a move to be made lightly and heedlessly, he thought, and for an instant the insane notion of flight gripped him. But that would mean certain death, and this way he had some chance of survival . . . Shaking his Homburg impatiently he squared his shoulders and rapped on the panel. The door opened at once; and he entered with forced briskness, stepping from one personality into another in the space of seconds.

Of course it had taken him months to prepare for the transition. He knew nearly as much about the man whose place he was taking as he did about himself. He was familiar with every habit, characteristic, mood, and phase of the personality he was assuming. What the man wore, ate, read, and talked about, his likes and dislikes, mannerisms and idiosyncrasies, the detailed history of his life. He knew all about the estranged wife, the pilot-son who had died in a flaming Spitfire in Tunisia and the student-son at Oxford, the daughter who had married a penniless Italian marchese.

He was thankful that the suite showed no evidence of disorder or violence. Mario and Serge must have accomplished their task with neatness and dispatch. He noticed that Mario, the short squat swarthy man by the door, was still gaping at him, and he said sharply:

"What's the matter with you?"

"The resemblance! It's amazing, incredible! I never realized until now. It gave me an awful start, Ivor." Mario wagged his head of blue-black curls.

Ivor smiled tolerantly. "What did you expect? I wasn't chosen blind-folded. Is everything finished here?"

Mario nodded and beamed, showing many prominent teeth as he pointed to the bedroom where one end of a large trunk was visible. The gush of running water ceased in the bathroom; and another man appeared, slender, wiry and sharp-featured, wiping his strong surgeon's hands vigorously on a towel, smiling without humor.

"Everything is fine, my friend. The operation was a marked success."

Ivor shuddered inside, despite himself. "They always are, Serge. There are no stains or anything?"

"Not a trace."

"I wish you had removed the trunk before I arrived."

"What difference does it make, comrade?" Serge tossed his balding gray-fringed head and laughed mirthlessly. "You can't expect to avoid every unpleasantry. Think of Mario and myself."

"That's your work," Ivor said coldly.

"Yes, I know. We work with our hands, you with your brain. You consider us butchers, but we are certainly essential."

"No one denies that," said Ivor. "You'd better get out of here with it now, before somebody comes."

"It's ready," Serge said shortly. "Addressed and everything. But we're not carrying it out, comrade. Call the desk for a porter." He smiled slyly at Mario. "It's your room, you know."

"Certainly," Ivor said stiffly, sitting down by the stand, keeping his back to the others as they hauled the trunk into the living room.

He wished there were some way of getting it out to the express company without utilizing the hotel employees, but there didn't seem to be any. Ivor stared out the window and over rooftops to the Hudson River, seeing the immense red-painted stacks of the *Queen Mary* at dock and wishing he were to be on it tomorrow when it embarked, instead of on a train or plane for Colorado.

Realizing that the other two were watching him, Ivor picked up the telephone. When the desk answered he said in a precise clipped British voice:

"This is Dr. Wyatt Haviland, Room two-six seven-four. I have a large trunk to be shipped by express . . ."

Tinsley and Cochran halted in the corridor before Suite 2674. Tinsley knocked and a crisp voice bade them enter. Wyatt Haviland rose from the desk at which he had been writing and regarded them sternly.

"I'm Dr. Tinsley," Jack said, extending his hand. "This is Mr. Cochran of the F.B.I."

"I rather expected someone older," Haviland said, shaking briefly with Tinsley but making no move to greet Cochran.

"Being young and a novice, I was more easily spared," Tinsley explained. "The older men are anxious to see you, Dr. Haviland, but didn't want to interrupt their work."

Haviland saw them seated and returned to his chair. "Does one need a bodyguard in this country?"

Tinsley laughed quietly. "Probably not. But the government takes no chances with distinguished and important guests."

"You should be in the diplomatic service, young man," stated Haviland. "Are you making progress in Colorado?"

"Yes, but it's slow, of course."

"More specifically, please."

"We have registered the actual destruction of a nitrogen nucleus by the primary proton," Tinsley said. "Observing the breakdown into an alpha particle, a proton and a neutron, and two or more mesons. We have proven that the mesons are the units of energy, powerful enough to plunge a thousand feet into the earth's surface."

"That theory was advanced some time ago," Haviland reminded.

"Advanced, yes, but never proven," said Tinsley.

"Then you have recording in-

struments, superior and more sensitive than any in the past?"

"We have," assented Tinsley. "Far superior, as you'll see."

"Have you any records or material with you that I might study tonight?" asked Haviland.

"No, I haven't. But you'll have access to the files when we reach Mt. Evans."

"Sorry to bore you young gentlemen with shop talk," Haviland said. "I take it this is a sort of vacation for you?"

"Sort of," said Tinsley. "Would you care to go out to dinner and perhaps a show?"

"No, thank you. I shall dine in my room and retire early. I trust that Mehrtens, Ansteatt, Carlebach, Zulker, and such scientists are still with the project?" Haviland's tone was caustic.

"Oh yes," Tinsley assured him. "Are you acquainted with them?"

"By reputation only." Haviland stood up with a slight but obvious gesture of dismissal. "Well, gentlemen, I won't keep you from the evening's amusements any longer."

"Do you prefer to travel by air or rail?" inquired Tinsley. When Haviland shrugged he went on. "We'll meet you here at seven then, ready to go to LaGuardia Field."

"Agreeable," Haviland said. "Good night, gentlemen."

Outside in the corridor Cochran turned up his coat collar with a mock shiver. "These scientists! These cold codfish. They ought to be atom-bombed out of existence!"

"He wasn't exactly cordial, was he?" Tinsley smiled. "How did I do, Ed?"

"Great," Cochran said dryly. "You impressed the hell out of me, Jack But the Englishman figures you're strictly a bush-leaguer . . . Something funny about that guy. Seems like I've seen him somewhere before."

"Well, he looks like his pictures."

Cochran laughed harshly. "When you catch me looking at pictures of scientists, chum, shoot me dead."

* * * * *

Wyatt Haviland had comfortable quarters in the Crest House on the barren rocky heights of Mt. Evans. Close by was the Inter-University Laboratory, icy Summit Lake surrounded by bleak snow-patched walls of naked stone, and the sites of experiments sponsored by Princeton, Denver, M.I.T., Chicago, Cornell, and N.Y.U. Six miles north on Chicago Creek near Echo Lake were another laboratory and experimental stations maintained by Michigan and other universities.

Haviland had been working long, hard hours to transcribe the significant records and results to date, and to familiarize himself with the instruments and machines, methods and techniques, employed by the Americans. His associates were not surprised to

find him a man wtih an unlimited capacity for absorbing knowledge but very little talent or inclination for imparting facts. It was a one-sided affair, in which the American scientists gave all and received nothing in return. But they were under orders from higher up to hold nothing back from the British genius, so willingly or not they had to give.

Ed Cochran, strolling in the brilliant moonlight with the vivacious Redhead, often observed Haviland's lights burning far into the early morning hours. Jack Tinsley, checking the recording counters in his lonely, lighted tent, noticed the same thing and wondered when the Englishman ever got enough sleep to keep him going. Haviland was always one of the first down to breakfast, and out early to inspect the open-air and tent counters, the shack-housed metal ionization chambers, the electro-magnets, automatic registers, and cloud chambers.

Silent and alert with keen probing interest Haviland watched the balloons ascend with their counters to record cosmic rays up to altitudes of 75,000 feet. He studied the assembly of two-ton steel spheres used to trace the tiny charged particles, and dressed in a buoyant protective waterproof suit to help measure the penetration of the rays into the water of Summit Lake. Avid and tireless, he collected data from every station on the mountaintop.

"He works," said Dr. Carlebach, "like a man with a very short time to live."

"He's a human blotter," grumbled Ansteatt. "With no saturation point. He sops up everything in sight."

"Well, he's no sponge," Mehrtens declared with irony. "You can squeeze a sponge, but I'm damned if you can squeeze anything out of Haviland."

The newspapers were late in reaching Mt. Evans, several days or sometimes a week. Most of the physicists didn't mind this, being wrapped up in an unearthly world of their own, and Haviland had shown little interest in the news until that morning he emerged from breakfast and found Ed Cochran in the lounge with papers scattered about him.

"Some train out west," Cochran said conversationally. "A bad one, they don't know how many dead yet. Heard it on the radio last week, but I didn't hear this part of it. They found a trunk busted open in the baggage car with the dismembered body of a man in it."

"Is that so?" said Haviland with bored indifference. "You have a lot of that sort of thing in this country, don't you?"

"Enough," admitted Cochran. "But that's going to be an awful shock to whoever shipped the corpse. Another perfect crime gone wrong."

"How can they ever find out who shipped it?"

"Easy. They'll get the one it was addressed to. He'll talk and through him they'll get the murderer."

"What if it was sent to a fictitious name and address?" persisted Haviland.

Cochran glanced up, surprised at the man's interest. "I don't think it was," he said. "The murder was done in New York. At least the trunk was sent from there. Somebody on the Coast was supposed to get it and sink it in the Pacific. They wanted to get rid of that body for sure and permanent. Sending it to a phony wouldn't do that." Cochran tossed the paper aside. "I guess I'll take a walk."

"I have some more paper work to do in my room," Haviland said, an unnecessary explanation in view of the fact that he had pointedly ignored Cochran from their first meeting.

Cochran lit a cigarette and sauntered outside. He walked, but not out of view of the Crest House. Haviland did not appear. An hour passed and the Englishman still hadn't come out. Cochran went back to the lobby to buy some cigars. The lounge was deserted. At least half of the newspapers that had been there were missing.

"Maybe he likes trunk murders," mused Cochran. "Maybe that's his one vice." Setting fire to one of the cigars Cochran strode out in search of Jack Tinsley. In this business you couldn't afford to overlook a thing, no matter how far-fetched and irrelevant it seemed on the surface.

Tinsley was interested but skeptical. "Just because you don't like the man, Ed," he protested.

Cochran was checking back on dates in his mind. "That trunk was expressed the day before we left New York. The day we met Haviland."

"What would he murder anybody in this country for?" asked Tinsley. "He just landed here, didn't know anybody, never been to the States before. This inactivity is giving you a powerful imagination, partner."

"You're probably right," Cochran said gloomily. "I ought to resign and set up as a private eye and get myself some excitement."

Tinsley grinned. "You've been reading books and seeing movies."

After lunch Cochran sat on the front steps of the Crest House chewing another cigar in the gusty sunshine. Haviland came out with one of those waterproof arctic suits rolled up under his arm and loitered on the porch. After an interval he spoke:

"Would you do me a favor this afternoon, Cochran?"

"Why not?" Cochran said. "Anything to further science and break the monotony. What can I do for you?"

"I want to try some more experiments on Summit Lake," Haviland said, almost shyly. "I wonder if you'd row the boat for me."

"Sure, I need some exercise," said Cochran. "Are you all set to go? I'll drive you up in one of the jeeps."

"Hadn't you better get one of these suits?"

"Hell no," said Cochran. "I don't need to get bundled up in one of those monkey-suits. It would spoil my stroke. Let's go, Doctor."

Cochran drove the jeep while Haviland examined the box of small delicate instruments he'd brought. There was also a coil of fishline with substantial lead sinkers attached. Cochran whipped the jeep around boulders, rock-piles and ledges with reckless bounding speed, somewhat surprised that Haviland uttered no objections.

Summit Lake looked cold and desolate, ringed with sheer craggy rock-walls, long irregular fingers of snow pointing down from the top, drifts of shale and gravel on the shoreline at the bottom. Haviland got into his suit and inflated it, while Cochran bailed out one of the more seaworthy boats. The basin was devoid of life except for themselves. Cochran began to wish he had let Tinsley know about this expedition. Cochran had the feeling that something was going to happen this afternoon. Well, it was high time.

"Get in and I'll push off," Haviland said when they were ready.

Cochran didn't like the idea of having the man behind him, but he climbed in without a word and sat down at the oarlocks amidship. Haviland waded into the water to shove off and clambered into the bow, instructing Cochran to row out into the middle where it was deepest. Cochran would have been much more comfortable if Haviland had been sitting before him in the stern where a passenger belonged. It was hard rowing with the prow weighted down.

"A man wouldn't live long in this water," said Haviland.

"I guess not," muttered Cochran, breathing hard from exertion in the thin air.

"You should have worn a suit, just to be safe."

"I don't plan to do any swimming," Cochran said, sullen now, thinking: *I'd freeze and drown in a very few minutes, while he could float around all day in that balloon-suit of his. I sure let myself in for some nice sessions. I should've stuck to pro football, with a head full of rocks like I got.*

They were nearly in the center of the lake when Haviland spoke again: "I should be in the back end of the boat. The principle is the same as trolling. If you'll stand up a minute I'll crawl past you."

"Be damn careful," warned Cochran, rising cautiously and setting his feet, balanced and ready for anything.

Haviland moved toward him, awkward and bulky in the blown-up suit, carrying the box of in-

struments. Haviland reached the rowing seat, stepped warily over it, and crept on, concentrating on the precious equipment in his hands. Cochran relaxed a bit as the man passed him, and it was then that it happened.

Seeming to suddenly lose his equilibrium Haviland lurched heavily back against Cochran. The boat rocked violently as Cochran's legs struck the seat. Starting to fall, Cochran clawed desperately at Haviland, but the Englishman flung off the grasping hands and shouldered Cochran roughly again, stepping on that side of the boat and tipping it low as he did so. Cochran floundered backward over the oar and landed on his back in the water.

He came up gasping and breathless from the icy cold, paralyzed and panicky. For a moment he couldn't move, the chilling shock was so great. Then, as he started to sink once more, he struck out frantically for the boat. Haviland bent down and extended a hand to help him, an anxious look on his long saturnine face, but when Cochran reached for that hand it was gone.

Cochran went under again, aching numb from head to toes. Coming up he caught the side of the boat with a frenzied effort, clinging there while his body turned to solid ice. Haviland stooped over him and Cochran saw that his face had changed, turned vicious, evil and gloating. Something hammered cruelly on Cochran's frozen hands until he let go and slid back under the surface.

With failng strength Cochran struggled back and emerged, spouting water, gasping and choking. The deep-knifing agony was gone and he knew he was freezing to death. Haviland meant to murder him, and it would pass for an accident, of course. He'd get away with it sure, unless Tinsley got on the ball. And that wouldn't help Cochran a whole hell of a lot once he was drowned in ice-water.

Flailing with rigid unfeeling limbs Cochran thrashed feebly back to the boat and fastened his fingers on the gunnel. Haviland crouched and beat on those blue hands until they loosened and dropped away. Submerging in total despair Cochran knew that he was done for, half-dead already and dying fast, and in his bursting head he cursed himself for a plain damned fool.

* * * * *

Jack Tinsley saw Cochran and Haviland start off in the jeep, and he grew thoughtful and strangely worried. It was odd that Haviland should suddenly become interested in Cochran, after disregarding him altogether up to this stage. On a quick impulse Tinsley called to a student who was shaving outside of his shack, asking if he'd take over the counter in Jack's tent for an hour or so. The boy said sure, he'd be glad to.

Inside the tent Tinsley pulled on a leather jacket and rammed the .45 automatic in under his belt, zippering the jacket over it. After a brief debate he also took the Garand rifle. If he had to do any long shooting it was best to be prepared. Outside he smiled at the student who was wiping his face.

"May get a shot at something."

"Bring me in a mountain-goat," said the boy. "I want a set of horns."

There were two jeeps standing idle near the laboratory. Tinsley appropriated one of them and wheeled it away toward Summit Lake, driving even faster than Cochran had. Probably a fool thing he was doing, but it didn't pay to take chances or let things ride. When the old fullback had a hunch about someone it was generally correct. Cochran told him once that he used to look the opposing linemen over, and nine times out of ten he could tell where he was going to gain and where it was going to be tough. Tinsley still couldn't see a man of science like Haviland as a murderer, but he sensed something wrong today. It had been extremely strong when he watched Cochran and Haviland drive away together.

Tinsley guessed Summit Lake because it had looked as if the Englishman was carrying one of those waterproof suits. He parked the jeep behind a ledge above the lake and started down the trail. In a minute he was running hard without quite knowing why. First he saw the jeep, then the wharf with the other boats, and finally the small craft out in the middle of the pond. There was only one man in the boat, he realized with horror, and it was Haviland in his inflated suit. Then he saw Cochran's head break the surface a few feet to one side.

Sprinting onto the dock Tinsley raised his voice in a ringing shout: "Pull him out! He'll freeze in that water!"

Haviland looked ashore, bobbed his head, and reached for an oar, moving in slow-motion like a dazed man. "Hurry up!" yelled Tinsley, straining his throat. "Get him outa there!" Haviland thrust the oar toward Cochran; and it looked as if Ed shied away, as if he was afraid of getting hit. Finally Cochran caught hold and was dragged to the side of the boat. He seemed exhausted, and Tinsley wondered how long he had been immersed in that ice-cold water.

Haviland had him under the arms now but was having difficulty in lifting Cochran's deadweight. "I - can't - do - it," Haviland called hoarsely.

Tinsley raised the rifle. "You'd better do it, mister!" he screamed in fury.

Haviland heaved mightily and at last got Cochran's middle over the edge and hauled him in. Cochran collapsed immediately in the bottom, and Haviland sank

weakly to the rowing seat.

"Use those oars!" shouted Tinsley. "Get in here fast!"

Haviland started rowing clumsily, splashing water, making little headway.

"Row, damn you!" Tinsley yelled, kicking the planks in helpless rage and fear for Cochran.

Haviland labored harder but his progress seemed agonizingly slow. Tinsley knew that bulky suit was a handicap, yet he had the feeling that Haviland was deliberately stalling, and a blazing consuming hate for the man filled Tinsley to the bursting point. He thought: *If Ed dies I'll kill that Haviland. So help me, I'll shoot him like a mad dog.*

The boat finally nosed the shore. Tinsley jerked it high on the gravel beach and bent over the unconscious Cochran. "Help me get him into this jeep," he said. "Mine's up the road. You can drive it back."

"He fell overboard," Haviland panted. "He—"

"Never mind," Tinsley said. "I'll get the story later."

"I tried," moaned Haviland.

"Yeah," said Tinsley. "You were trying hard when I came. You were standing there watching him drown."

They got Cochran into the jeep and Tinsley swung in behind the wheel, backed around swiftly, and roared off up the trail away from the lake, bucking fast over the rough surface.

Haviland stood there watching the yellow dust cloud up in back of the rocketing machine. Well, he had bungled it. He would have to get away before Cochran recovered enough to talk. There was a chance, of course, that Cochran might die, but he couldn't bank on that . . . It was going fine until Tinsley showed up with that rifle. Tinsley must be a government agent too, he decided.

It could be worse, Haviland philosophized. He had practically all the data and information he needed anyway, he had sucked the camp dry. There was nothing of any importance that he had missed. The thing to do was disappear. He wondered where Serge and Mario were. They should have been here before now, with a car.

He would have had to leave soon, regardless of this incident. That train wreck had ruined everything. Perhaps by this time they had Mario and Serge behind bars and were coming after him. Well, he'd be well away before they arrived, before anyone could stop him. He didn't know just how, as yet, but he would escape one way or another. If he had to kill Tinsley and some of the others it would be a pleasure. It was easy to hide in this vast country, a great deal easier than in Europe. Once out of these mountains they would never catch him.

But he did wish that Serge and Mario would arrive, because they

would know about the plane that was to pick them up and fly them out of the United States.

* * * * *

A spacious log cabin across from the laboratory had been fitted and equipped as an eight-bed infirmary, with an M.D. and a nurse in attendance. This evening the lone patient was Ed Cochran, swathed in electrically-heated blankets, thoroughly thawed out now and impatient at being restricted to bed. Jack Tinsley sat in a chair beside the white bed thoughtfully smoking his pipe.

"I thought I'd never get warm again," Cochran said. "But I'm beginning to burn in these new-fangled blankets. Nurse, will you please turn off the heat?"

She did so with the smiling remark that he was a very bad patient. Cochran grinned at her: "Let me out of here and I'll send you a patient who'll really need hospitalization!"

"You're sure it couldn't have been an accident?" Tinsley asked.

"I wasn't at first," said Cochran. "I thought he just lost his balance, and then his head when I grabbed at him as I was falling. But when I got hold of the boat and he pounded my fingers I *knew*. And the look on his face, Jack. It came to me like a flash who he reminded me of that first night, and where I'd seen a look like he had in the boat. It was a Russian officer in Berlin, snatching a soldier's bayonet and stabbing a prisoner to death."

"Don't all men look more or less alike when they're killing?"

"Not quite, Jack. I never saw an Englishman or a Yank look like that. Bad, yes, but not that bad."

"You don't think he's English?"

"No," Cochran said. "But he put on a nice act."

"What became of the real Haviland then?"

"He wound up chopped to pieces in a train-wrecked trunk; that's my hunch."

Tinsley stood up fondling his pipe. "I'm going to see this Haviland before he decides to blow camp. I had the word spread that you were still unconscious so he wouldn't hurry too much."

"Then you suspected him, too," Cochran said.

Tinsley smiled faintly. "He wasn't trying too hard to save you, Ed, when I got there."

"Wait a minute till I get my pants on." Cochran threw off the bed-clothes and started to get up, but Tinsley pushed him back into the sheets.

"No, Ed. I can handle him. You're still suffering from shock and exposure." Tinsley held a firm hand on Ed's chest.

"The hell I am!" said Cochran. "He may have some friends skulking around in the woods."

"You stay here, Ed." Tinsley walked away to the door.

"I'll be seeing you, chum,"

Cochran called after him, and added under his breath: "Soon!"

The second the door closed on Tinsley, Cochran swung out of bed and started dressing. The nurse hastened and attempted to restrain him. Cochran said: "Jack's in danger. You don't want him killed, do you?"

"I'll call the doctor."

"He can't stop me either," said Cochran. "Where's that damn gun?"

"All right, I'll get it for you," the nurse said wearily. "The doctor cleaned and oiled it."

"That's great!" Cochran said. "Tell him I'm much obliged."

"I'm afraid we gave you too much brandy," sighed the nurse.

Cochran grinned, his square homely face crinkling pleasantly. "There ain't no such thing."

Tinsley meanwhile, crossing diagonally toward the Crest House, noticed a strange sedan with Michigan plates in the yard. There was nothing unusual about this, for scientists from all over the country were forever coming and going, but Tinsley was trained to observe all details. Rounding the corner of the stone-and-glass structure he saw the lighted windows of Haviland's room and breathed deep in relief. In the lobby he asked the desk clerk who had arrived in the Michigan sedan. The fellow didn't know or seem to care. He had never forgiven Tinsley and Cochran for diverting the Redhead's fancy from him.

Tinsley had phoned the F.B.I. office in Denver for any further developments in the train-wrecked trunk murder. In California they were still hunting the man it had been addressed to. Apparently the story had broken in the papers in time to warn him, because he had vanished immediately. In New York they were trying to trace the shippers of the trunk. It was going slowly; the press had made it bad for them.

"Is there anybody with Dr. Haviland in his room?" Tinsley asked.

"Not that I know of," replied the clerk. "He doesn't seem to be interested in waitresses."

Tinsley stared the clerk down and thought it would be a good idea to slap the dope around a bit sometime soon. But right now he couldn't be bothered. He mounted the stairway rapidly and met the red-headed waitress in the corridor.

"Jack!" she cried softly. "Is Ed all right?"

"Sure," said Tinsley. "They can't hurt the old pro."

The Redhead narrowed her green eyes. "I knew that Haviland was a snake the minute I saw him!"

Tinsley patted her firm rounded shoulder. "Take it easy, Red." He went on down the hall and rapped on Haviland's door.

Haviland opened it, his thin face expressionless. "Come in, Tinsley. I've been expecting you." He turned back toward the desk.

Tinsley followed him into the room, pushing the door shut behind him. Haviland motioned negligently toward an easy chair. Tinsley was stepping toward it when he sensed danger, some other presence behind him. Tinsley reached for his gun and started spinning about—too late. Something swished wickedly and smashed the back of his head. Tinsley bowed under the impact, his knees buckled, and he dropped loosely to the carpet, his skull roaring with explosive lights.

The short, squat, black Mario grinned toothily down at him, blackjack dangling from his hairy wrist. The spare ferret-faced Serge trained a German P-38 pistol on the fallen figure.

"No, you idiot!" snapped Haviland. "No unnecessary shooting here."

Serge smiled his inhuman smile, pocketing the automatic and producing a spring knife. "This is silent enough, Ivor."

"None of that either," Haviland ordered. "We are leaving at once. You two go down now and get in the car, I will follow. Perhaps I'll take another car and drive ahead of you. If there's any pursuit we can block that narrow mountain road with your sedan."

"Have you got everything, Ivor?" inquired Mario.

"All I want is in this brief-case. Move along now, you two."

They went down and waited in the big powerful sedan, Serge at the wheel, Mario sitting with a gun in his lap. Haviland descended with the bulging brief-case, told the clerk he was going to the lab, and emerged on the wide veranda. At that moment Dr. Mehrtens skidded his custom-built convertible to a stop in front of the Crest House and got out hurriedly, leaving the motor running.

"Ah, Haviland," he said. "One minute, please."

Mehrtens, a fat shambling hulk of a man with a jovial smiling face and small merry eyes twinkling behind spectacles, was one of the top nuclear scientists in the world and in charge of this cosmic ray research project.

"What is it?" demanded Haviland.

"Did you borrow that folder labeled 'Biological Effects of Cosmic Radiation'?"

"Why yes," said Haviland. "Are there any objections, Doctor?"

"You didn't sign for it."

"I must have forgotten. I'm very sorry."

Mehrtens looked at the brief-case. "Are you going somewhere?"

"Yes, I have to go into Denver tonight."

"Where is that folder, Haviland?" Mehrtens asked bluntly.

Haviland suddenly lost his patience. "I have it here. Now kindly stand aside."

Mehrtens remained motionless, a stolid impassive bulk, his fat face somber all at once. "You take a lot for granted, Haviland.

You're too high-handed. You have been right along. I must ask you to leave that file here."

Haviland l a u g h e d then, a strange snorting half-mad laugh. "I must say you're ridiculous." Haviland's right hand came out of his coat pocket and blue steel glinted in the vague light. Orange fire spurted from the muzzle as the gun crashed. Mehrtens, head wagging in disbelief, pressed his large hands to his great body and toppled slowly, ponderously, to the stone floor of the porch.

Haviland ran and jumped into Mehrtens' convertible, backed out and swung it hurtling down the road. Serge wheeled the long sedan around and sent it roaring after the other machine.

Jack Tinsley, lying half-senseless on the floor in Haviland's room, heard that shot through the dinning surf of pain in his head. Rousing himself with a wilful effort, Tinsley crawled to hands and knees and pushed himself erect, groggy and weaving. The door was locked. Having no time to waste, Tinsley shot the lock off and staggered out into the corridor, reeling toward the stairway.

Ed Cochran heard the report and got out of the infirmary in time to see the two automobiles race down the road. Seeing the shapeless mass of Mehrtens' body on the veranda of the Crest House, Cochran started in that direction. He was across the way when Tinsley stumbled out the front door, paused briefly by Mehrtens' lifeless form, and went wavering on toward the nearest car. A coupe owned by Carlebach, the luggage compartment in the rear wide open, as Carlebach had left it after unloading on his return from Echo Lake.

The key was in the ignition switch. Tinsley fell in behind the wheel, righted himself, started the motor, and backed out of the yard. Cochran stepped out of the shadows and lunged into the roomy baggage compartment, bracing his feet and shoulders, bending his head to avoid contact with the metal. Cochran had to go along on this trip, so he seized the one opportunity, scorning the discomfort and danger. He knew Tinsley would not have stopped for him.

Tinsley shifted swiftly and drove careening down the highway, accelerating as his head cleared and his vision sharpened. Ahead the lights of the preceding cars lanced the night as the road curved and twisted. Tinsley had the advantage of knowing every foot of the route, and he was gaining slowly but steadily. It occurred to him that their purpose in taking two cars was undoubtedly to employ one as a roadblock while they continued in the other. Tinsley tramped on the gas with increasing pressure.

Now the road skirted a vast towering cliff, midway between top and bottom, an ideal place for a block. On the right a steep jagged wall reared almost perpen-

dicularly into the night sky. On the left was a sheer thousand-foot drop to the pine-forested slopes below. The machines in front were slowing as the trail narrowed and wound in sharp bends, a thin shelf across the broken face of the precipice. Still bearing down on the accelerator Tinsley whipped the coupe along that slender coiling ribbon of road, closing upon the others consistently.

Taking an abrupt corner with the skill and judgment of a racing driver Tinsley came suddenly upon what he had been looking for: the long sedan parked at right-angles across the road, taillights reddening the rock barrier, headlights shafting out into open space over that deep abyss. Slamming on the brakes, Tinsley fought to hold the coupe on the highway as it slithered, skidded and swayed crazily. There was little momentum left when it rammed into the side of the sedan, but back in the luggage compartment Cochran was already half-unconscious from the battering ride in cramped quarters.

Tinsley jumped out with intentions of taking the sedan, if they had been careless enough to leave the key. The coupe had jammed the doors on this side so he would have to go around to get in. Tinsley reached the front of the hood when two men loomed before him, guns in hand. Tinsley fell back in dismay and disgust, and the men followed him.

"You take a lot of killing," Serge said, frisking him and grabbing his automatic. "This time we'll more than make positive. Step over to the edge of the cliff." He motioned impatiently, a gun in each hand now.

A shot blasted out from the rear of the coupe, and Tinsley felt the hot breath of the bullet that knocked Serge down on the brink of the chasm. The other man, Mario, whirled to seek this unexpected assailant. Tinsley set his feet and threw everything he had into a right-hand punch. Mario's hat flew off, his curly black head jerked violently, and he bounced off the front fender of the sedan, flopping forward on his face.

Rolling over with a groan Mario fired one blind shot before Tinsley's foot stamped into his swarthy face, grinding the oily head into the hard-packed dirt surface. Tinsley crouched to secure the man's gun, and a slug seared close overhead as Serge suddenly recovered enough to trigger his P-38 from a prone position at the outer edge of the strip.

Cochran, braced against the back mudguard of the coupe, turned his .45 loose in a torrent of roaring flame. Serge's slim body shuddered and leaped with the shocking smashes of lead, writhing and rolling over the rim, plunging down out of sight. Cochran walked unevenly forward, inserting a fresh clip in his

automatic, grinning cheerfully at the amazed Tinsley.

"Where the hell did you come from?" asked Tinsley.

"Don't tell me you aren't glad to see me, chum," Cochran said. "Not this time . . . What about this one? Shall we heave him over, too?"

"We ought to," Tinsley said. "But we won't. We can pick him up later. Haviland's the one we want most. Come on, Ed, the key's in the car. I've got the key to the coupe so *he* won't be driving off."

Cochran stopped to strip off Mario's shoes and socks, tossing them over the cliff. "You sure ruined this guy's face, Jack."

"He wasn't very pretty anyway," Tinsley said.

"I'll take the wheel," said Cochran. "I've had enough of your driving for one night."

"Yeah? Well nobody invited you to come, invalid."

Cochran laughed. "No? But think where you'd be now if I hadn't, sweetheart!"

Mehrtens' convertible was faster than the Michigan sedan, but Haviland was not familiar with the route. They gained on him all the way down from the mountains, but never quite got within range. Haviland seemed to know somehow that the enemy had taken over the sedan. Once they hit the paved thoroughfares of the lowlands Tinsley was afraid Haviland would run right away from them.

He would have too, if he hadn't taken the curving entrance to the bridgehead of a railway overpass altogether too fast. Failing to make the turn the speeding convertible jumped the walk and sideswiped crashing into the concrete wall, with the hideous rending screech of tearing crumpling metal.

The wheel crushed the breath out of Haviland, but otherwise he was unhurt. Piling out of the wreck with the brief-case in his left hand, a gun in his right, Haviland watched the headlights of the sedan sweep around the bend and zoom up to the overpass. Back in the mountains, parked ahead of the road-block, Haviland had witnessed the downfall of his confederates. They had been stupid, careless, assuming confidently that there was only one man pursuing them. They deserved to die.

A freight train was rumbling and clanking through on the rails beneath the bridge, moving slowly as yet, the tops of the boxcars not far below the level of the highway. Firing twice at the oncoming sedan, Haviland pocketed the pistol, clasped the case under his left arm, and climbed over the bridge wall above the freight. He dropped without hesitation. The moving boxcar yanked his feet out from under him, and he fell heavily, nearly rolling off but clutching the raised runway in time to save himself. Getting up, panting and sweating in the cool night, he started forward along

the top of the train.

A small starred hole had appeared in the shatterproof windshield of the sedan as Haviland's gun flashed, and a hammer-blow numbed Cochran's right shoulder, driving him back against the cushion. He held the car in the road, however, and brought it smoothly to a stop behind the wrecked convertible.

"You're hit, Ed," Tinsley said, his voice choked.

"I'm all right, Jack," said Cochran. "But I'll have to check out here. Get going, chum. Haviland went overboard onto that freight."

"Get to a doctor now," Tinsley advised sternly.

"It's just the shoulder," Cochran said. "I can drive all right."

"Get it taken care of quick."

"Sure, I'll head for the nearest hospital," said Cochran. "Go after him, kid."

Tinsley flung himself out of the car and peered over the side of the bridge. The railroad tracks were fenced in; there was no way of getting around to them. He'd have to jump, and he'd have to hurry before the train passed. Looking back Tinsley saw a string of coal cars coming. That's for me, he thought, swinging over the wall and hanging there. It meant a longer drop, but it was safer than hitting a boxcar. The low coal cars were in under him now. Tinsley drew a deep breath and leaped into space, landing and tumbling back in the rough coal.

Scrambling to his feet Tinsley clambered forward over the coal and climbed the rusted iron ladder of the first boxcar. On top he ran along the narrow board walk, jumped to the next car, and went on running and leaping from car to car. The freight was picking up speed now, swaying and rocking, and in the open country the wind buffeted and tore at him.

Haviland might have left the train, Tinsley realized, but it was doubtful if he would jump off this close to the highway and his pursuers. Possibly he figured they wouldn't dare to follow him here. Smiling thinly Tinsley raced on along the plank runways of boxcar after car.

A break ahead signified flatcars and Tinsley slowed his pace, stopping and creeping forward to the end of the last freight-car. There were two trucks on the flat, pointed toward the locomotives. Just as Tinsley thought they would afford a good hiding place for Haviland, a streak of flame jetted from the rear window of the second cab, and another. Tinsley thrust himself back from the edge as lead whined close and raked up splinters. Lying flat on the wood Tinsley drew the Luger that had belonged to Mario and plotted his next move.

Taking off his jacket Tinsley crawled ahead and waved it in the air, drawing another burst of shots from the far truck. He tried it again in a few minutes, and Haviland loosed a third fusillade.

That ought to empty his gun. Peeping over the end Tinsley estimated distances and retreated on the runway, pulling on his jacket. Then, sprinting forward, he sprang through the rushing air, lighting on the flat body of the truck and diving onward into the shelter of the cab.

Aiming around the corner of his cab Tinsley twice shattered the back window behind which Haviland was crouching and reloading feverishly. As Haviland began hammering shots at the rear truck Tinsley dropped from the tail and crawled the underneath length of the vehicle. After halting a moment to let his heart slow and his breathing regulate, Tinsley snaked his way on beneath the front truck. Haviland was still wasting bullets, firing in blind fury, and Tinsley smiled. The guy was pretty jittery. He'd probably go off his noggin when Tinsley popped up beside him.

On his back, the Luger poised and ready, Tinsley inched out below the running-board on the right side, and saw the broken seal on the door where Haviland had gained entrance. Out in the clear Tinsley rose carefully. Haviland was still sniping from that splintered window. Tinsley ripped the door open and jabbed the gun-barrel into the man's right shoulder.

"Drop it," Tinsley said quietly.

Haviland whirled wildly, face frozen in horror, ready to fight and die. He was trying to swing his automatic on Tinsley when Jack shot him through the right arm. The pistol clattered to the cab floor and Haviland screamed once. Tinsley's left hand caught him by the collar and dragged him off the seat and out of the truck. Broken-armed and weaponless Haviland still wanted to fight, striking out with insane strength. Tinsley clubbed him to his knees with the Luger, knocking him flat and cold with a final slashing stroke.

Wearily Tinsley sat down on the running-board and lit a cigarette in the shelter of the open door, with Haviland sprawled senseless at his feet.

In a few minutes two brakemen with lanterns were there. "What the hell's going on here, bud?" they wanted to know.

"F.B.I.," Tinsley said. "I've got a prisoner here."

"Don't tell me he's still alive after all that shootin'!"

Tinsley grinned. "He did most of the shooting himself."

"Must be a damn poor shot," muttered one trainman.

Tinsley nodded. "For which I am duly grateful. When's the next stop?"

They examined their watches. "About ten minutes."

"That's fine," Tinsley said. "I'm hungry as hell."

"Do you guys always black up when you're chasin' somebody?"

Tinsley touched a blackened hand to his coal-grimed face, and his teeth shone whitely. "Only

when we travel on freights," he said.

He delivered Haviland's impersonator to headquarters in Denver, and learned that they were holding Mario on the mountain. He found Cochran in the hospital, right shoulder bandaged and arm in a sling, flirting with his nurse.

"Did you have a nice train ride?" grinned Cochran. "We ought to have a little vacation coming to us, chum."

"Yes, Ed. You were right on this one, all the way through."

"Oh, I'm smart. If I hadn't been such a powerhouse I'd have been a great quarterback. Where we going, Jack?"

Tinsley smiled. "Thought I might go back to Evans and finish my experiments. Kind of interested in that stuff now."

Cochran groaned, then brightened. "Well, I could continue my research with the Redhead, I suppose." He frowned at his friend. "I still think you're a bush league scientist, chum. But you do a pretty fair big league job for the outfit that pays you."

LISTEN

for these stars in new, exciting radio programs on your local radio station

Listen to VINCENT PRICE

Vincent Price, internationally-known Star in all four mediums: screen, stage, television and radio will now be heard in his own new radio series "The Fine Art of Eating." A gourmet himself, Mr. Price is a renowned cook and will feature in this series interesting talks of culinary adventures throughout the world.

Listen to RUSS HODGES

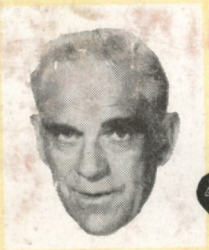
Today finds Americans more sports-minded than ever before. "Sportopics" featuring Russ Hodges, World-famous announcer of top sporting events, will bring to radio stories of all sports, their origins and their development. Many of America's favorite sports have had amusing and fascinating beginnings.

Listen to Chester Morris

Hollywood's own Chester Morris, whose famous "Boston Blackie" movie series was perhaps the forerunner of all the detective pictures, will be heard on radio in his own series as Private Eye, Ed Noon in "The Windup". You'll have a chance to match your wits against Ed Noon and try to guess who the guilty party is.

LISTEN

for these stars in new, exciting radio programs on your local radio station



Listen to BORIS KARLOFF

Are you one of the Frightened? . . . This is what Boris Karloff asks in his inimitable, low spine-tingling tone as he stars in the new radio series, "The Frightened". Everyone enjoys thrilling, chilling adventures, and the undisputed master of the mysterious is the sinister-voiced Mr. Boris Karloff.

Listen to T. H. Mitchell, LL.B., Ph.D.

Dr. T. H. Mitchell, world-renowned economic expert, whose uncanny knack to delve beneath the complicated pattern of important financial events has earned him doctorates on both sides of the Atlantic, will be heard on his own radio series "Your Economy". This program will tell how trends in business affect your life.

Listen to Quentin Reynolds

When the personal story about his life was finished, Eisenhower was asked to check it. He refused saying that it was not necessary since the story had been written by Quentin Reynolds. This great author, journalist, and commentator who had been paid this compliment is on radio with "This Age of Ours."