BLUE BOOK

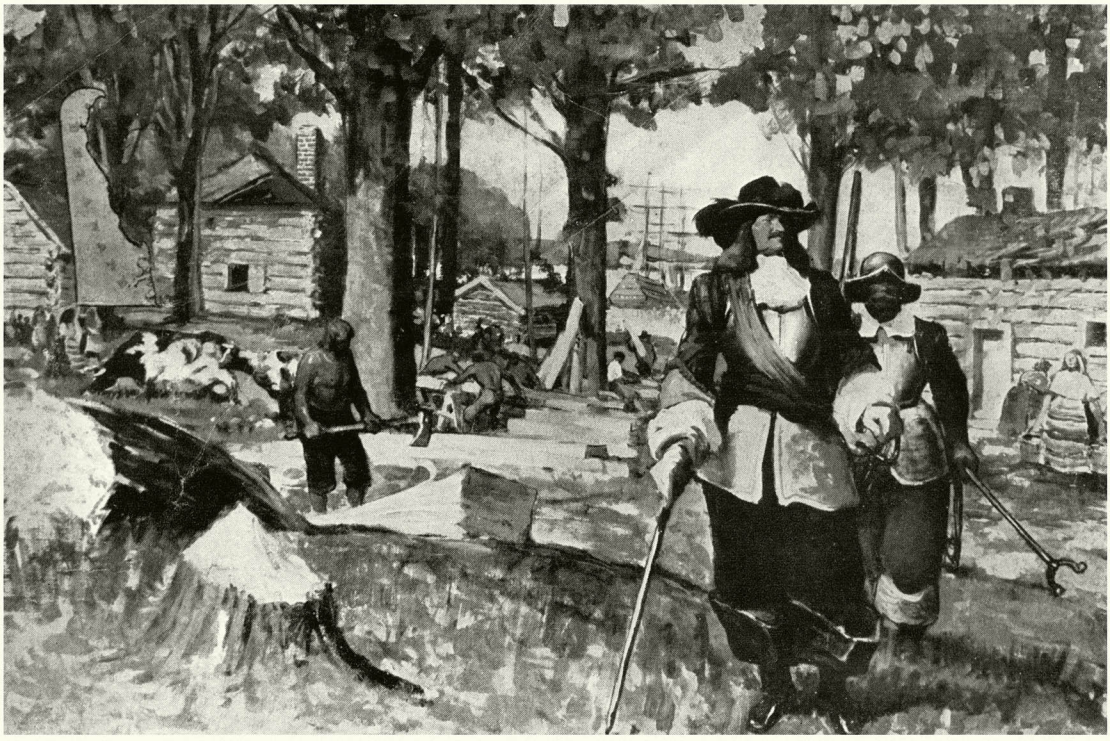
MAGAZINE FOR ADVENTUROUS READING ★ OCTOBER ★ 25 Cents

THESE UNITED STATES . . . XXXIV
Delaware—*Painted by* JOHN FULTON

THE MARKED FIELD
A complete book-length novel
by CARL L. BIEMILLER

THREE STRIKES FOR BATFISH
Strange battles of submarine against submarine *by* Comdr. EDWARD BEACH

ONCE THERE WAS A GENDARME
A novelette *by* GEORGES SURDEZ



THESE UNITED STATES....XXXIV—DELAWARE

"Liberty *and* Independence"

TO the nations of Europe from which came our colonists we owe thanks for the doughty men of dauntless spirit who conquered the wilderness. Our gratitude also should include the many native arts and skills that made possible continued life in the New World. For the log cabin, which became the typical American pioneer home, we are indebted to the colonists of New Sweden. This colony, the first and only Swedish colony in America, was established in March, 1638. The original colonists, twenty-three soldiers and two officers, built a fort on the shore of a small stream emptying into the Delaware River. Both fort and stream they named Christina, in honor of their queen.

A fourth expedition, arriving in 1643, brought to New Sweden a new governor, Johan Printz. "A man of brave size, weighing over four hundred pounds, whose profanity was famous from Massachusetts Bay to Old Point Comfort," Printz expanded his domain to include the whole Delaware River Valley. He succeeded in monopolizing the fur trade by driving out of his territory the English, who came from New Haven, and the Dutch, from New Amsterdam. The Indians called him Big Gut, but with marked respect; and of him it is said that "every pound of him was of the stuff of which empires are built."

In 1655 the Dutch, under Peter Stuyvesant, captured the colony from Printz's successor. In 1664 Britain gained control of all Dutch territory, and held the colony, then known as the Delaware Basin, until the Revolution.

After the Revolution, in 1802, E. I. DuPont began the manufacture of gunpowder on the banks of the Brandywine. Today the E. I. DuPont de Nemours Company, located in Wilmington, is the largest manufacturer in the United States of a diversity of chemical products, ranging from nylons to explosives.

Wilmington, with about half the total population of the State, is the chief manufacturing center. Leather goods, machine products, hardware, textiles and shipbuilding are all important industries. The largest cotton and dyeing plant in the world is in Wilmington. In 1836 the first iron steamship in the United States went down the ways there.

Delaware's commercial fisheries produce annually more than 35,000,000 pounds of fish, valued at more than $200,000. About one-third of this total is shellfish: oysters, clams, crabs and lobsters. The most valuable catch is the menhaden, used for oil and fertilizer. Food fish caught along the coast include shad, sturgeon, herring and rock. For sportsmen, streams and lakes, as well as Delaware Bay, offer a variety of catches.

Fruit raising and broilers are important sources of agricultural income.

Delaware was the first State to ratify the Constitution of the United States. Its motto, "Liberty and Independence," well reflects the character of the State.

Readers' Comment

A Treat in Store

SELDOM has a story so fascinated me as "Star of Doom" in the July issue, by Lewis Sowden. The scope of the author's imagination, the integration of modern science, sprightly fancy and psychological knowledge make it one of the most astounding examples of masterly writing I have ever read. No facet of human behavior or social mores is ignored. The characters are real, throbbing, living, frightened human beings. I found myself wondering what I would do under the same circumstances. Perhaps the novel also contains a moral—I think so.

Most stories of fantasy are so implausible they are dull; or the characters become robots marching stiffly this way or that at the author's behest. Miraculously this two-part serial has an air of authenticity that is almost devastating. Its characters are so deftly portrayed that we are identified with them, for good or evil.

My newspaper boy tells me cheerily each month, "BLUE BOOK is out." This news will be more welcome than ever when the August issue gives me the ending to this amazing story. I am glad that you published the novel in two parts—I have a second treat in store for me. Thank you—and the author.

—Joseph Mahler

We Go to College

BLUE BOOK is very popular with college students, as I learned when I read to my class a passage from its pages as a fine example of modern writing. The excerpt I read happened to be part of the page you reprinted in your July issue as a tribute and a memorial to H. Bedford-Jones, "Flags of Our Fathers."

As I finished the reading, a chorus of delighted voices began clamoring for a chance to tell of other things they had read in BLUE BOOK magazine. What appealed to most of the class was that they could meet in your pages, without pomp or parade, many of the famous persons they had studied about in history and literature. Introduced casually, their backgrounds given, yet with contemporary story interest, these characters were like old friends to them.

Another feature the students liked was the fact that they could read a story through and stay in the mood the author had created, without having to break off and find the rest of the story continued on some page which they invariably forget. So college students say: "All hail to the BLUE BOOK, and keep it as good as it is, and just as it is."

—Ruth M. Bell

BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

October, 1949 — Vol. 89, No. 6

A Complete Book-Length Novel

A Novelette

Ten Short Stories

Stories of Fact and Experience

Special Features

Except for articles and stories of Real Experience, all stories and novels printed herein are fiction and are intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any living person is used it is a coincidence

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BLUE BOOK Magazine is published each month simultaneously in the United States and Canada by McCall Corporation. Publication and Subscription Offices: McCall Street, Dayton 1, Ohio. Executive and Editorial Offices: 444 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y. MANUSCRIPTS and ART MATERIAL will be carefully considered but will be received only with the understanding that the publisher and editors shall not be responsible for loss or injury. SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: $2.50 for one year; $4.00 for two years; $6.00 for three years in U. S. and Pan-American countries (Add $1.00 per year for other countries); $1.80 for one year; $3.60 for two years; $5.40 for three years in Canada. Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions to our publication office, McCall Street, Dayton 1, Ohio. IF YOU PLAN TO MOVE SOON please notify us four weeks in advance because subscription lists are addressed in advance of publication date and extra postage is charged for forwarding. When sending notice of change of address give old address as well as new, preferably clipping name and old address from last copy received.

Printed in U.S.A.

Entered as second-class matter November 12, 1930, at the Post Office at Dayton, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

RENDEZVOUS

IT was Mackinn's thought as he lifted the bagpipes that he'd come a long and strange way. But if this would help bring the Laird home, he was glad. The wind was in the pipes, and he swaggered just a bit, starting a reel.

The Laird danced with the plump pretty missionary woman, showed her a nice foot. Mackinn watched them with pleasure. He hadn't seen the Laird so happy since the victory at Waterloo. The others here, though, were also worth watching.

Tonight was the end of rendezvous, and the mountain men were wild in their eagerness to dance. They hauled the young squaws forward, knowing that tomorrow meant loneliness and the far ridges of the Rockies. A lot of the braves were in it too, and against the firelight Mackinn saw the figures in a constantly changing frieze.

Every woman was dancing; yet there weren't enough. Bearded trappers clasped each other, howling to the sky as they stepped and whirled. Bannock squaws danced with Nez Percé braves. One of the gaunt and dour-faced missionary men swung a Flathead squaw who was drunker than a sack of shillings. Out beyond, clapping, hooting, stamping, were the Indian folks too old or young to dance. Dogs ran among the dancers, frantic with the sound of the pipes, ears pricked high.

Such a sight would startle Scotland for certain, Mackinn told himself. The Lady and the rest of them back there had little knowledge that folks like these existed. Mackinn brought fresh wind into the pipes and played a strathspey, a jig.

The night was for it: his music flowed fine. Overhead, beyond the crest of the Rattlesnake, a planet held milk-pale, and around it the stars blazed their vast designs. Smoke from the tepee fires hung in slender pillars down the valley, and the leaves of the cottonwoods and aspens were silvery.

Mackinn closed his eyes part of the time, locked within the music. The mountains here put a spell upon a man, he sensed. A spell of his own must be all the greater for it.

The wind was in the pipes, and Mackinn swaggered just a bit, starting a reel.

Sweat was down the buckskins, and along the red paint-daubed arms. The Laird thrust the long blond hair out of his eyes and called: "My sorrow, Davey, don't be killing us! Have a breather and a drink, man."

Mackinn took a drink from the keg direct, went back to playing. But he noticed that Joe Beckett, the trader who supplied the whisky, had stopped dancing. Beckett stood beside the tall Englishman named Dondero. Both were sober, thoughtful. A number of the braves and trappers had reached the point of falling-down drunkenness. They lurched into other couples. There were fist-fights, and knives were shown. The Laird, dancing once more with the missionary woman, swung her too close to the fire and her petticoat caught aflame. Her husband made a great noise about that. Mackinn lowered the pipes, let the wind go.

He glanced at the Laird, and the Laird nodded. They walked slowly through the crowd and down into the valley. Now, Mackinn thought, the Laird was ready to talk of Scotland and home. He had been patient, for the master of Castle Brouillie was a high-strung and moody man. Since his arrival here with Beckett's column from St. Louis, he had said almost nothing about affairs at home and why the Lady had sent him. He had studied the Laird in his new surroundings, waited for just the right moment.

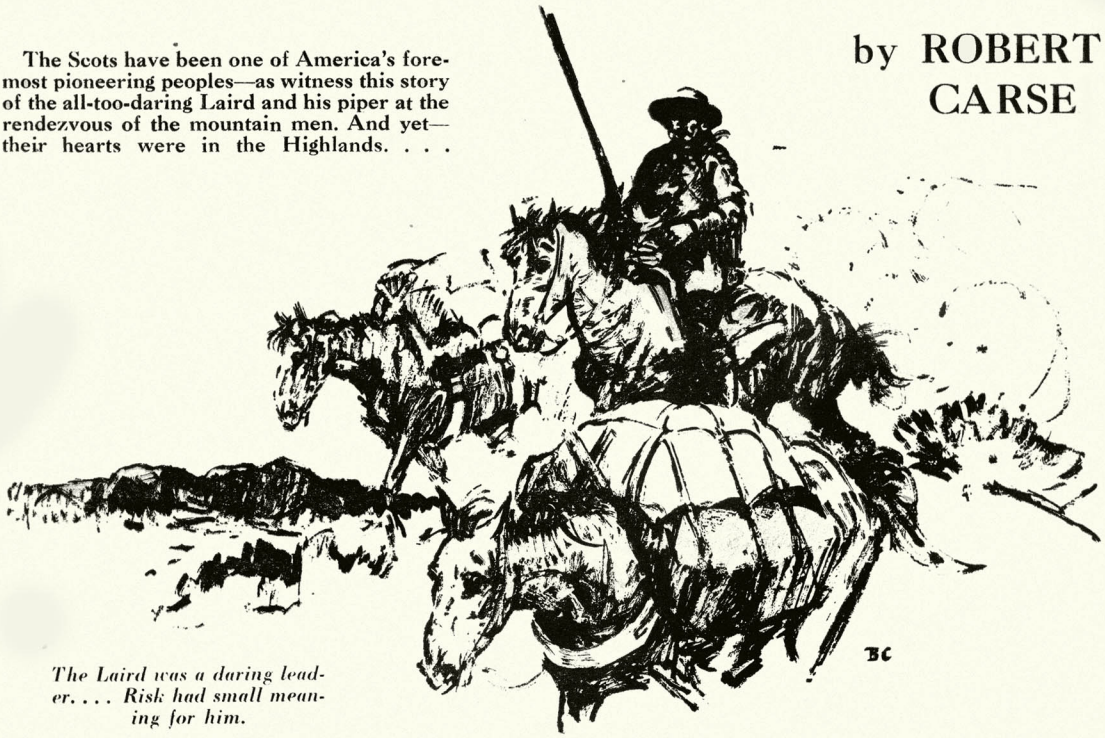
THIS was it. The rendezvous was over. Through the ruddy, irregular patterns of the firelight, the Indians and their women moved, taking down the tepees, making them ready for the trail. Joe Beckett's trade booth was still open, and a group of trappers stumbled at the counter, stubborn about another drink. But the rest had got their outfits together; horses and pack-mules stamped neighing as the cinches were brought tight. Parties reached the pass, turned to wave, shout back, then were gone in dark silhouette.

The Laird stood motionless. An expression of intense emotion held the long, deep lines of his face. "Davey," he said to Mackinn, "what was it the Lady said when she sent you out after me?"

"Och, it wasn't a lot," Mackinn said. "But let me get it just so for

The Scots have been one of America's foremost pioneering peoples—as witness this story of the all-too-daring Laird and his piper at the rendezvous of the mountain men. And yet—their hearts were in the Highlands. . . .

by ROBERT CARSE



The Laird was a daring leader. . . . Risk had small meaning for him.

you." He was suddenly no longer in the Wind River Valley on the slope of the Rockies. Instead, he was in Scotland and at the Castle. His memories took him there, and he tried to think of them all, hoping they would help the words he had to give the Laird.

Another mist was on the ground; it held the scents of the heather, the broom and bracken too, the moss of the glen and the firs of the lochside. Plover cried. A cock grouse ruffled lazily in the strath, and a mavis sang. Mackinn could see the Lady again, feel her hand and hear her voice. "You're the man to fetch him home, Davey," she said, standing beside the carriage in the driveway. "He's been gone too long from his own. We need him here. Tell him that, and my love, and that is all."

Mackinn said the words in a clear voice. He stared steadily at the Laird. The Laird cursed. "You'd make me think I didn't love her, and yet I've written every chance there was."

"The year's thirty-three," Mackinn said. "You've been gone some time, since you and me got back from Waterloo. She misses you sore, Brouillie, both her and the bairns."

"But I came away," the Laird said, "to raise the money which would save the estates." A rage was on him which Mackinn had seen before and understood. "There was nothing I could do at home but drink and count my debts. They piled against me during the wars, and she's aware of that. But did she think to charm me back because you're clan piper and served with me?"

"Maybe," Mackinn said; the Laird's words had stung through, caught his pride a bit. "More than once, we've been off and come home together. It's possible that she reckoned on that."

"You're the canny kind, all right," the Laird said, and laughed. Still the tension hadn't left him. His glance was sidewise on the parties entering the pass.

PATIENCE, Mackinn thought, was fine. A lot of it had already been used, though. When he'd parted from the Lady, she had been crying, an unco' rare thing for any Highland woman to do. "Are ye goin' home, Brouillie?" he asked.

"No, I'm not," the Laird said. "I'm for the mountains once more. There's a party arranged, and I'm leading it north tonight."

"By your own word," Mackinn said, "ye've failed twice straight. The first year, ye were late back to rendezvous, had to sell your furs at a loss. Last year, the Blackfeet got the furs and near took your life too." His voice was flat; yet some of his anger, some of his anxiety came up into it. "Most of the lands at home have already gone to the moneylenders. Now, should ye lose, the Castle and all will be taken."

"Correct, Davey," the Laird said. His hands went out and clasped Mackinn's shoulders; and despite himself Mackinn was reminded of how the Laird had carried him wounded from the breach at Saragossa, and the marches, the campaigns they had shared together. The Laird seemed to have sensed his thought, for he went on swiftly: "I can't go back as I am. Success alone will take me. But if it's as risky as you believe, come along."

"Ye tempt me, Brouillie," Mackinn grunted. He fingered the pipes gently, as if from them he could draw the wisdom he needed. Many of the mountain men he'd met here at rendezvous had told him that the Laird's bad luck wasn't uncommon. The mountains themselves, too, were braw and grand, greater as a fact than those in Scotland. It had been lonely, dull at home with the Laird gone and the wars finished. And in the spring, should they come out with a fine haul of furs— But the chill old soldier's caution closed in, and he said: "Who'd back ye and the party for the winter?"

"Michael Dondero," the Laird said, smiling. "He's a good sort, former captain in the Lancers. Came out with the Hudson's Bay people, and traded for them in the North for

quite a time. But he broke with them, operates his own independent brigade of trappers. He's taken my personal note. Beckett will supply us with everything we need."

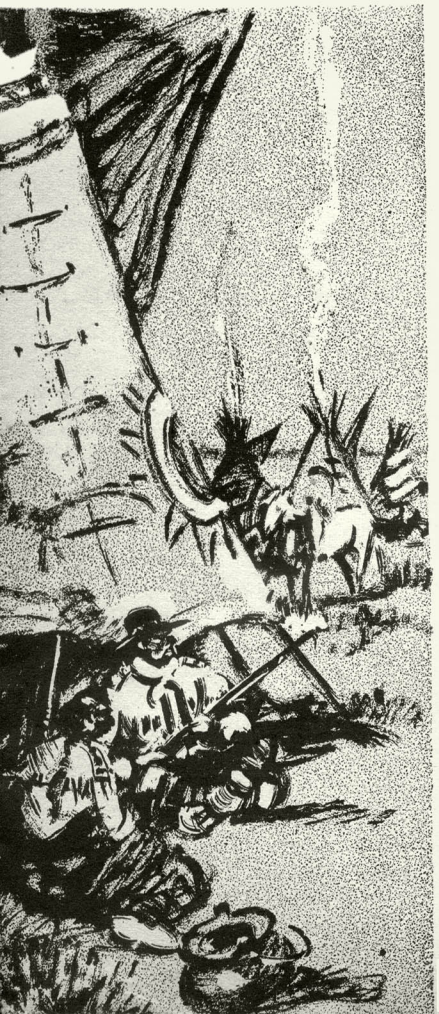
"So then," Mackinn said in his slow way, "I'm with ye. Who else?"

"Only five men," the Laird said, "but all of them experienced. By spring, Davey, you'll know a beaver by his whiskers alone."

"And I will," Mackinn said. He grinned back at the Laird, but he was remembering how his wound-stiffened leg had bothered him on the way across the plains. "Maybe, though, I should get out o' this." He pointed down at his kilt. It was made of green, gray and blue Brouillie hunting tartan, and he had worn it steadfastly, once west of St. Louis. "A suit of them buckskins now, such as you wear."

The Laird took Mackinn by the shoulders again, shook him hard. "We'll each of us be wearing the best long woolen pants and coats Joe Beckett has to sell. The snow's deep here in the winter, Davey, and it's cold enough for even a Highlander's shins. But, come on; Dondero wants us to join him in a drink."

Smoke from the tepee fires hung in pillars across the valley.



Dondero sat before a tepee with his half-breed squaw. His bland, reddish face and corn-colored mustache reminded Mackinn of a hundred English officers he had known. But Dondero was generous with his pouring of the whisky, told the squaw to put a set of buffalo ribs on the fire. He wished the Laird and Mackinn luck with the first drink. "I'm glad that you're to accompany Brouillie, piper," he said to Mackinn. "Shows true clan loyalty that you've come so far to join him."

Swirling the whisky slowly in the tin cup, Mackinn considered the answer to that. He glanced over into Dondero's blue, slightly narrow eyes. "Thank ye," he said. "But if I didn't think there was a great pile o' pound notes to be got in the mountains, I'd be headin' straight back for Scotland. I've heard that it's easier for a man to lose his hair up North than to make his fortune."

"The Blackfeet would have it so," the Laird said, and both he and Dondero laughed. A kind of constraint had come upon the group, though, making the Laird carry the conversation. He talked with Dondero about the other's plan to guide the missionary party on their way to Oregon, then move into the North Country with his own trappers. "We'll be working the top waters of the Musselshell," the Laird said. "Look for us. Our winter quarters will be in the southernmost valley at the foot of the Big Snow range."

"Very fine," Dondero said. He formally shook hands. "I shall see you, then. Take care of your pipes, Mackinn. It will be pleasant to hear a bit of music."

MACKINN nodded shortly, turning off into the darkness with the Laird. "What's got you, Davey?" the Laird said when they were alone. "You know that's the fellow who's made our trip possible."

"And it's him," Mackinn said, "who if we lose, will be ownin' Brouillie Castle. But if I put ye on the outs with the man, I'm sorry. The playin' o' the pipes tonight might ha' made me think more than is good about home. I miss the glen, the sound of the water—the smell o' the heather."

"What you need," the Laird said, his voice also tight with longing, "is a sight of the North Country here; it will chase the Highlands from your mind. Before we leave, though, I'm giving Joe Beckett letters for home. That's all we can do, Davey."

"Except," Mackinn said, "to be keepin' the Castle." . . .

There was no use to deny it, Mackinn realized. He had never seen such country. Where they rode through the sunny, sweet days of late July and then August and September was an enormous panorama of beauty. Ridge after ridge reared purple and blue, knife-keen in the shimmering air. At night, when they came into the valleys to camp, the horses strode up to their hocks in the wild flowers of the meadows. Birches and willows were along the streams. Trout could be caught easily by a man with a skillful hand; often traps were set for an errant beaver whose tail, charred in the fire, was a delicacy to remember.

AFTER dark, they sat talking, and Mackinn got to know his companions. Asa Gray was the best of them, in Mackinn's belief. A veteran mountain man, he had trapped with Jim Bridger and Kit Carson. These ridges, peaks and valleys had become his life. He knew the North Park and Bayou Salade, the Plattes, the Green, the Grand and the Gunnison. Alone sometimes, and often with small parties, he had gone into Oregon and south to Taos. The others were three stocky and habitually morose French-Canadians and a half-breed Delaware. Unlike Gray, they had worked in their time for all of the big fur companies and most of the independents.

But Gray, by his own admission, had been too long in the mountains. He had experienced his share of danger and hardship, made the journey east to St. Louis the year before with the idea of staying there. Then the old lure had caught him, and he returned with a trader's outfit. He was fatalistic, aware that he would die in the mountains, and as content as the rest to take orders from anybody who would pay him a fair wage.

So in every practical sense, Mackinn discovered, the party was in the Laird's absolute charge. They went where he chose to go, and the Laird was a daring leader. He was taking them now into Blackfoot country. It was rich in furs only because very few parties had risked trapping it.

But risk had small meaning for the Laird. He waited impatiently while Asa Gray and the Delaware scouted the trail ahead. The posting of a guard at night, the need for unrelaxing vigilance irked him. Once when Mackinn turned him out for his own after-midnight trick, he was furious.

Mackinn lay awake long thinking about it. The winds of the world seemed to gather here, and he was deeply tired, lacked sleep. He sought back, though, to the reasons that had brought him to go with the Laird and he tried to understand their relationship. Bad feeling was growing

between them. The Laird resented him and the fact that he was in the party. For the Laird, he was a constant reminder of Scotland; his presence stirred the other to thought of the Lady, the bairns and debt.

They had started steadily trapping beaver too, and Mackinn's stiff leg had made him almost useless. The hours of wading in the chill, swift streams at dusk and dawn had crippled him. Asa Gray had been working with him as his partner, but Gray couldn't handle the traps alone. He and Gray had come in with fewer pelts than the others, were late in rejoining the party. The Laird had shown his irritation as a result of it.

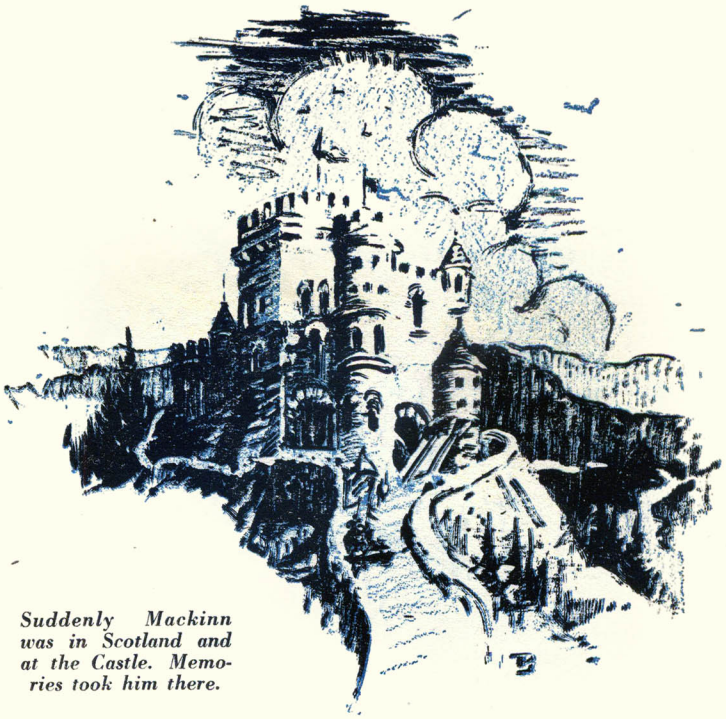
Riding through a high pass, he had been asked by Asa Gray to point out where the Blackfeet had jumped him. It had been complete disaster, the Laird said simply, and indicated the valley in which it happened. The Blackfeet must have followed them from the North, carefully picked their moment. They had stampeded the party's horses, forced the lot to run from the camp with nothing but their rifles. Behind, baled and ready for the trader, were left more than ten thousand dollars in prime furs.

The Laird swung in the saddle while he talked. His glance came to Mackinn. "The piper will tell you. He's been sent from home because that cost me some of the finest land I owned."

"Aye, he's right," Mackinn said. He recognized the sources of the Laird's anger, wanted to check his own. But his leg ached fiercely and months of constant danger and hardship were to come. The barrier of self-control broke. "In the old days, we used to hunt the stag there. It would look like it wasn't what might help ye later against the Blackfeet."

A scarlet spread of color went up into the Laird's lean, sun-tanned face. He sent his horse forward at a fast trot. Every man except Mackinn was laughing at him.

But to give the Laird an answer like that wouldn't make the future safe, Mackinn told himself, and stirred uneasily in his blankets. He had to find a way to keep the Laird from reckless action. It was beginning to get cold; scum ice was forming at night along the banks of the streams. Soon it would snow and they'd be forced to set up camp for the winter. He'd have a chance to get back to old times with the Laird, to put things straight. *Sleep now, Davey. You're young no more, and that left leg's not among the best.*



Suddenly Mackinn was in Scotland and at the Castle. Memories took him there.

They forted up for the winter in a small, narrow valley. It had a southern exposure and plenty of cover. Winds striking down from the reaches of the Big Snow range beyond kept the bunch grass clear of drifts for the stock, and the evergreen grove served them for fuel and their stockade and cabin. The Laird was content. He figured they were well fixed, and he was already looking forward to the spring trapping. But to Mackinn the circumstances meant sheer misery.

Each day the Laird took the others out to hunt the game that was needed. Mackinn, due to the condition of his leg, was left behind alone. His work became the monotonous chores of the camp. He chopped wood and tended the stock, did the cooking. The piles of beaver pelts had to be cleaned, scraped free of tissue and sinew, then stretched, marked and folded.

The low-roofed cabin gathered a greasy, sour stink. Snow flicked through the logs, numbed his hands enough to make them clumsy. Back drafts flung down the chimney, gagged and blinded him. There was always with him the thought of a possible Blackfoot raid. Hearing a sudden, unexpected sound outside, he would drop the pelts, take up his rifle.

Once it was timber wolves in among the horses and mules. He lost his temper, fired and killed two. The sight of them flopped in the snow gave him a sensation of pleasure. "Ye're down to doin' squaw's work, Mackinn," he said aloud, "yet ye can still send the lead straight."

He left the carcasses out in the open for the returning party to see. When the men came in, the Laird said nothing, only stopped to stare for an instant. Clerot, one of the French-Canadians, spoke. He told Mackinn that he was a fool. The echoes of the shots in the valley could bring the Blackfeet here. Mackinn hadn't known the degree of his nervous tension. He found himself cursing Clerot back and striding across the cabin, a billet of wood in his hand.

The Laird stopped him, pitched him nearly prone into a corner. Asa Gray had Clerot's arms locked, and the dominant sound in the room was the harsh release of breathing. Mackinn shook himself. He looked down at the chunk of wood he still held. Shame came to him, and the bitter recognition that he had been ready to fight a man for a mistake of his own making.

"We'll have no more like that, Mackinn," the Laird said. His eyes were hard, narrowed. It was years, Mackinn thought dully, since the Laird had called him by his last name.

Asa Gray moved over to the fire, turned the meat upon the ramrod spit. "We'll get all the trouble we can use from the Blackfeet," he said in his mild voice. "Near caught me today up on the ridge. Had to leave a prime bighorn and scamper out."

Mackinn sat apart from them after supper. A maze of dreams formed for him and he slipped into it. His melancholy, his feeling of frustration were too keen to be accepted any longer. The dreams put him in Scot-

This was the time to fight. . . . Ten, maybe more, Blackfeet were close around.

land. He stood before the fireplace in the great hall of the Castle. His pipes were under his arm and around him were the eager, excited stag-hounds. Rory Dhu was coming through the pantry door carrying the vast silver platter that held the haggis.

The dream changed. He was in the glen. They hunted the red stag, higher, higher. He ran leaping the rocks, nimble through the brooks. At the crest he was first and called the cry of triumph.

It was night and he rowed the loch. Young Margaret was beside him. "Davey," she whispered, soft as the mist, "ye're me lad. I can never love another more."

Margaret. . . . Out on the rock-gaunt plains of Portugal and Spain he'd forgotten her. There was the fighting, and the tawny, tough lasses of the captured towns. After Saragossa the fighting hadn't been so easy, what with his leg. But then was Waterloo and the grand, brute parade in Paris. All of the pipers of the Sixth Scottish were playing. Davey Mackinn of Clan Brouillie was with them, and proud as was his right.

The dreams slowly disappeared. He was again in the sour dampness of the cabin. The men were asleep, the Laird near the fire, its fading light on his face. If you've changed, Mackinn thought strangely, so has the Laird. Mark how haggard his face is, Davey, and the lines around the eyes. It means a great lot to him, more than it ever can to you, to have the winter go right. Be patient. Keep your yaup shut and your wits about you. Christmas is close, and spring can't be too late coming. Then we'll head for rendezvous and home. . . .

It was a week before Christmas that Asa Gray was killed. The others came back without him, were surprised not to find him at the cabin. The Laird went up into the ridges alone and near dawn walked in, the stripped and ghastly body across his shoulders. "Blackfeet," he said, and fell asleep against the wall.

Mackinn felt the loss much more keenly than the rest. His sense of desolation returned, deepened. Among the men, Gray had been his only friend during the recent months. He was the one who had talked about the Oregon country. In his dreaming, Mackinn had thought vaguely several times of a trip to Oregon with Gray.

The daily chores became difficult for Mackinn. He moved through a lethargy of despair. But the others, he noticed, were the same. The Laird had to force them out to hunt even after the meat supply was very low. Christmas morning, with a snow gale crashing around the cabin, they refused to move.

When Dondero pounded on the door he was almost shot. They barely knew him in his long Mackinaw capote stiff with snow. Then the Laird let go a wild shout, hauled him in to the fire. Dondero grinned around at them. "A glum-looking lot," he said. "I've the medicine for you outside."

They jammed through the door to unload the travois pulled by his horse. There was whisky in one of Joe Beckett's crescent-shaped tin kegs. There was a whole side of buffalo ribs, and coffee, sugar, tobacco. The other men went whooping in with the load, and Mackinn, aware of his isolation from them, took the horse over to the grove. The fine Pelouse animal whinnied nervously at the herd. He rubbed it down and gentled it. For an instant he wondered how Dondero could travel this country in safety when a veteran like Asa Gray had been killed. But happy shouts came from the cabin and he lost the thought, hurried back.

Dondero brought him a cup of whisky, strongly gripped his hand. "Good to see you," Dondero said. "I was just telling Brouillie that my lot's forted up well to the south. Took a bit of marching to find your place. I'm the sort, though, who likes a tune on Christmas. Could you play for us, piper?"

"Aye," Mackinn said. The whisky was hot in him and his fingers were trembling for the feel of the pipes.

He played hour after hour for them, the gay and happy and carefree tunes. Then the whisky and his hunger got him and he put down the pipes, sat by the fire. The others squatted to slap his shoulder, give him choice pieces of meat. They told him again how much they had enjoyed his music; then all together they sang.

Mackinn was amazed. He had been entirely wrong about Dondero. The tall Englishman had made everything different. His gifts, his laughter and songs took the gloom out of the cabin.

A sense of ease held Mackinn. He felt close friendship for these men. Dondero and the Laird were starting a new song. It was "Grandfather Kept Fallin' Out o' the Cart." Although none of the French-Canadians or the Delaware 'breed could catch much of the meaning, they boomed into the chorus, tears of laughter on their cheeks.

Mackinn stretched out farther by the fire. The bad spell was broken, he thought. Dondero had done for it. The rest of the winter would be all right, and the spring. . . .

Dondero left at dawn of the next day. He had to 'tend to his own lot, he told them, but he would see them again in the spring before rendezvous. They watched him ride into the glitter of the sun-swept snow expanse to the south, waving until he was gone from sight. Then the Laird said: "A fine lad, that. Let's get to work."

For Mackinn and for the others it seemed that spring came fast. There was rain for ten days straight, a thaw afterward, and the Laird gave the order to pack and move out to the southern beaver streams. They were eager to go; that was away from the main Blackfoot country.

Mackinn couldn't do a lot during the spring trapping. His leg still nagged him with sharp rheumatic pain. But he was spry around the camp, an expert now at skinning and treating the furs, and the others said nothing about his disability. They considered him an equal, kept up the cordial spirit that had been created by Dondero at Christmas.

Dondero was a great topic of camp conversation at night. They recalled the songs he had sung and his jokes. They wondered where his party was, whether he was having trouble with the Blackfeet.

"Not Mike Dondero," the Laird said. "He's too smart to get caught up by them." . . .

Dondero rode into camp on a fine day in June. They were camped just below the rim of a deep-walled, dangerous valley called the Chaudière. It took its name from the fact that the shape was like that of a giant kettle, the spout end a narrow defile giving onto open and comparatively safe country. The Chaudière was ideal for an ambush, but in this season the valley floor was lush with the bloom of wild flowers. Dondero had flowers stuck in the band of his broad-brim hat; a garland was twined into the mane of the Pelouse.

To the men who watched him he brought back all their Christmas memories. Trotting through the dusk toward the fire, he made a magnificent figure. They ran out and shook his hand, helped him dismount. Then they all sat down beside the fire and talked.

"I've come straight through the Chaudière," Dondero said, "and not a Blackfoot to be found. My outfit made it yesterday and we scouted every bit of the way. They're camped now past the other end until I join them. I'll be going back after supper. Just stopped by to tell you the valley was clear and to see how you are."

"Very fine," the Laird said. He indicated the bales of furs in the outer firelight. "There's the worth of your note and the saving of Brouillie Castle. But thanks must go to you."

"Think nothing of it," Dondero said. "I've been glad to help." He rose and went to where Mackinn sat, clapped him on the back. "You'll have stories enough for them when you get home to Scotland. Don't forget how you piped on Christmas."

"That I won't," Mackinn said. A strange constraint was suddenly upon him. He felt an almost psychic dislike of Dondero. It was intangible; he couldn't understand or fathom it, yet it was there. He took no further part in the conversation, kept motionless, staring into the fire.

After Dondero had gone, though, the design of a suspicion and doubt began to take form in Mackinn's mind. It was for various reasons that he distrusted the Englishman. Dondero had done too much, risked too much for him and the others of the party. Call it true that he held the Laird's personal note, but that was made good by Brouillie Castle. The Laird had been desperate in his gambling; the Castle was worth much more than his note. Still if he lost, the place went surely enough to Dondero. Add a fine catch of furs and—

Over closer to the fire, they were talking about the way they would go through the valley in the morning. It was the Laird's plan that they ride bunched together, pack-animals and all, use the daylight hours to get out fast into open country.

Mackinn limped across to the Laird. "If ye'd listen to me," he said, "I'd do it another way."

"Why, Davey?" the Laird said.

"Because," Mackinn said in his blunt, slow voice, "I have no trust in Dondero. Much better we start out tonight and ride along the rimrock, one man and then another. It's the dark alone that will save us."

They were silent for a moment, gazing up at him. Then the Laird laughed. "You're daft, Davey, off your head for sure."

"No. I'm cautious, nothin' else." The difficulty of what he was saying, the strain of emotion he experienced, brought beads of sweat onto Mackinn's cheeks. They doubted him instead of Dondero, he realized.

"I want to get back to rendezvous with the hair on me head," he told them. "I'd be keepin' Brouillie Castle. But go down in that valley tomorrow, and ye'll get trouble. How do ye think Dondero rode alone to us at Christmas-time? How do ye think he came alone here now? Is he a better mountain man than Asa Gray, that he can escape the Blackfeet so? He works with the Blackfeet, and there's the answer. Each time he's come to us, it's been to check on the pelts we've got. He'll have your pelts, Brouillie, and all else that belongs to ye. If he was an honest man, he would ha' kept his party here to ride the valley with us, and in numbers we'd be safe. Think on it, Brouillie."

But the Laird was getting to his feet. A look of terrible rage tautened his face. His hands twitched, and it was hard for him to keep them down. "Mike Dondero's my friend, and a gentleman," he said. "The whole lot of us have been helped by him. We haven't seen a Blackfoot since Gray was killed. There's probably not one in the country for fifty miles. So sit down. Be still."

"Ye must think," Mackinn said. "If ye—"

The Laird hit him, without much force. It was a glancing blow to the side of the head. Mackinn made a sound that was part groan, part curse. His body bent forward, and his hands were out. But he checked himself. He stood away. "Brouillie," he said very softly, "I can't give it back."

He turned around then and went from the fire. His gear was piled in the shadows. He took his blankets and spread them out, lay down. The men were silent at the fire; he could hear his rushed, thick breathing, the grind and click of his teeth. But the worst of the anguish passed. He was quiet, hunched as if asleep.

After a while they left the fire, the Laird first. The Laird came to stand beside Mackinn. He said: "Davey, I'm sorry."

Mackinn failed to move. He waited for the Laird and the others to get into their blankets. The Delaware had the night guard; his buckskins creaked as he sat down against a tree. . . .

It was more than an hour, the way Mackinn counted. He lowered the blanket and watched the Delaware. The man wasn't asleep, but he gazed at the ridge above. Mackinn slid from the blanket, sure of what he was going to do, and fast in his actions.

The bagpipes were wrapped in his kilt on the top of the pack. He took

them and his rifle, pushed the rest of the gear under the blanket. Then he got up and stepped off among the trees. He thought once the Delaware had heard him, but there was no shout or movement, and he kept on toward the rimrock of the ridge.

He stopped when he was up on the rimrock itself. His woolen pants had big patches at the knees, were tattered at the cuffs. He was glad to take them off, pitch them into the sagebrush. The kilt was better anyhow, he told himself, then smiled at the conceit. He was scared, and the only reason he wore the kilt was to buck his spirit.

Moonlight flung across the Chaudière from the far rim. It cut fantastic islands of shadow out of the valley. Some great boulders stood clear, and a few greasewood and sagebrush clumps. The rest might hide half a dozen Blackfoot war parties.

He studied the valley from end to end, trying to figure how deep in he would have to go and the way he might escape. There was no telling, he realized. It all depended upon the power of the pipes and his left leg. But he'd get to know whether or not Dondero and the Blackfeet were in here, and if they were, he'd warn the lot at the camp.

When he was down in the valley and listened to the fine, faint web of noises of the night, he was aware that he didn't do this out of pride. Neither was it for the Laird. It was for them in Scotland, the Lady, the bairns, old Rory Dhu and the rest.

His father had taught him the playing of the pipes, had said that he should be forever happy to be a piper. Well, he was. Tonight, by their use and what few brains he had, he could save Castle Brouillie from Dondero.

Mackinn put down his rifle on a boulder. Out across the valley, new among the sounds, was the dim clack of a horse's unshod hoof. It stood hobbled among the greasewood maybe five hundred yards ahead, and he was able to distinguish others.

He cursed beneath his breath. The valley wasn't empty, as Dondero had said it was. He was all but sure now that the man had been lying. Quite probably Dondero himself was out there among the greasewood and the boulders.

The Laird carried a heavy buffalo gun. It knocked the Blackfeet sprawling.

But with the sound of the pipes, Mackinn knew, he would make certain. If they were friendly men, they'd welcome him. If they were enemies, he'd draw their fire. He took the wind into the pipes as a magpie fluttered and crickets kept on chirping. The first note he gave was high and thin, a stab of sound. He let it lower, and through it broke the suddenly stifled whinny of the Pelouse horse.

THAT was Dondero's personal animal. Dondero hadn't ridden back to his own camp beyond the valley. He was right here and wanted to keep his presence secret. More than likely, Mackinn thought, Blackfeet warriors were with the man. Dondero had arranged an ambush in this place to catch the Laird's party as they rode through unsuspecting of any danger. The whole purpose of Dondero's visit today and at Christmas had been to throw the Laird off guard. . . .

"So now, Dondero," Mackinn whispered. He lifted the rifle, ranged a shot as close as he could to the Pelouse. But the wind was going from the pipes, and he quickly reloaded. He picked up the pipes and started to play again. He had to draw fire upon himself, he knew. It was only by the sound of the shots and the playing of the pipes that he could warn the Laird, get him to understand what was happening.

Mackinn strode back and forth a bit to ease the pain in his leg. It would take the Laird some time to reach here from the ridge. Meanwhile, it was better that he thought of Scotland and the playing. He gave Dondero's lot a target that way, but he also let the Laird find out where he was. *You've taken quite a gamble, Mackinn,* he told himself. *Dondero will hurry to kill you and keep you quiet.*

Mackinn sent a great, sad, fierce wail of notes forth into the moonlight. The echoes rose, fell back from the ancient tunes. They were the laments for those who had failed to return from Bannockburn and Culloden Field, Drummossie Muir and Philiphaugh. In them was the keening of the women as they heard the news of their dead, but the harsh shouts, too, as the clans took the steel and went to the charge. *You can go home, Davey,* he thought. *You may be killed here before the Laird comes, yet you can go home in your head. . . .*

Sparks licked from the rock where the bullet hit. The rest of the volley tore the air around his head. He heard Dondero's voice through the music of the pipes, and gutturally-throated yells in the Blackfoot talk. He put the pipes squawking aside, picked up and fired the rifle. There was no more sense playing any more,

Mackinn wryly recognized. This was the time to fight.

Some of the Blackfeet were mounted, now, and Dondero rode as their leader. Others crawled belly-flat, working in from the sides. Mackinn got a fair shot at Dondero, for the Englishman appeared to be insane with rage; he came in very near. Mackinn saw the tall, broad body heave erect with the bullet's impact, heave backward and down. The Blackfeet were jumping over the boulder, and Mackinn dragged away. The rifle was no good; he pulled the pistols from his belt. Ten, maybe more, Blackfeet were close in around him. He answered their shouts with the clan cry of Brouillie as he emptied the pistols, struck out with the butts. *Now you go, Davey,* he thought. *This lot has got you.*

But then behind him he heard the Laird. The Laird came crashing at a run through the sagebrush. He carried a heavy buffalo gun. It knocked the Blackfeet sprawling in death. Reloading, he came to stand beside Mackinn, called out to Clerot and the French half-breeds and the Delaware. They went carefully forward, returned to say that only the dead were left.

There were five Blackfeet corpses around the boulder where Mackinn had made his stand. Dondero was on beyond, his smashed face up to the moonlight. The Laird nodded to the Delaware and described a circular lifting motion with his hand. "Take all six," he said. "We'll need to show them as proof at rendezvous."

Joe Beckett was wide-eyed when the Laird opened the buckskin pouch and let him see the scalps. Then he reached under the counter, took the Laird's note from his tin box, ripped it across. "Looks like," he said, "that you and the piper are on the way to Scotland. How about a drink?"

But Mackinn had turned and was walking down the slope. He waited out beyond the tepee for the Laird. "I'll be stayin', Brouillie," he said simply. "Things ha' become different between you and me. Maybe I'll go into Oregon in the big-tree country where there's no snow. It's time, though, that you started home."

"You're right." The Laird lifted his eyes to Mackinn's steady gaze. "You were right, too, about the Chaudière. Good-by, Davey."

"Good-by," Mackinn said.

He sat with his back to the sun as the Laird rode out in the late afternoon. A trace of stubborn clan loyalty broke through upon his determination. He stood and picked up the pipes, played "Call o' the Glens." It would take Brouillie home, Mackinn knew, lead him safely the entire way.

The Dog and

"Bill, where did you get that dog? Look at me! No—in the eye!"

Wives will be wives; husbands will be husbands; and dogs — have a way with them.

by **OWEN CAMERON**

THE dog continued to grow, and it was a small cottage. Young Mrs. Beasley thanked goodness they didn't live in an apartment, and asked: "How big will he get?"

"One size smaller than a horse," her husband informed her happily. "Regular old Montana Airedale, such as I had when I was a kid."

Through the kitchen window they could see the enormous puppy, on sentry-duty near the back door. Young Mrs. Beasley cooed: "Next to my husband, I love that ugly brute best. Which reminds me—have you heard from your friend Joe?"

Glancing at the clock, Mr. Beasley muttered, "Be late for work," picked up his hat and kissed his wife in one swoop, and left by the back way for a last word with the dog.

Mrs. Beasley fed the dog in the kitchen, and talked to him while she did the housework. This edge of town was almost countryside, and a little lonely; but the rent was low, and a penny saved is a penny earned. The dog, Tink, was company and protection too. Seven months old, his voice was already well down the cellar-steps, and peddlers stopped outside the gate.

When Mrs. Beasley and the dog went for their usual long walk, Tink ran free of the leash, but returned every few seconds to assure her she was his one true love. Once Mrs. Beasley stooped to hug him and say: "You beautiful, ugly beast! My heart will break when Joe Jones takes you again. He couldn't love you the way we do."

She was grateful to Joe Jones, who paid the feed-bill and permitted them to have the joy of the dog. Young Mrs. Beasley was a good manager, who had a budget and knew where every penny went. The Beasleys ate well, if simply, but denied themselves such things as theaters and beer, hoarding for a purpose. Some day there would be two little Beasleys: Michael and Patricia. They were included in the budget.

They couldn't have afforded a pet, if Mr. Beasley's friend hadn't wanted someone to board his dog. Thought of the increasing feed-bill made Mrs. Beasley frown a little, and when at noon she fed Tink and set the cost down in her account-book, she added up the figures. The total startled her: forty-six dollars and eighteen cents.

That evening Mr. Beasley played the retrieving game with Tink while his wife washed the supper-dishes. Later, when they had settled down beside the radio, Mrs. Beasley told him how much Joe Jones owed.

Mr. Beasley mumbled an evasion, and she told him sternly: "You mustn't put things off, Bill. He can't realize how much it's costing to feed Tink."

"Ah, old Joe doesn't care about money," said Mr. Beasley.

"But we do. I want you to make a point of telling him."

"He's out of town. That's why we've got Tink."

"Then write. Ask him to send us some money."

"And insult old Joe?"

"Well, hint at it," said Mrs. Beasley. Her husband said nothing, and after a moment she added thoughtfully: "I still think it's funny I never heard of him before. I thought I knew all your old pals."

"Hadn't seen Joe for years. Listen to the program, baby."

"I thought you didn't like radio plays! Then why did he choose *you* to look after his dog?"

"This play I like, baby. I guess old Joe trusts me."

"I won't trust him much longer, unless he sends some money," said Mrs. Beasley. "Where did you say he was?"

"Huh? Who, Joe? Why, in—in Havana, Cuba."

"Cuba? You said Colorado. I know you did."

Mr. Beasley avoided his wife's eyes. "You sure? Well, he went to Cuba. Let's listen, baby."

IN a voice she could not make casual, she asked: "What does he do for a living, Bill?"

"Joe? Uh, cigars. Big importer. We can't talk and listen to the program, baby."

"No." Mrs. Beasley turned the knob, and the radio was silent. "You told me he was in politics."

"Did I? Well, in a way he is. The cigar end of it." Mr. Beasley had found an interesting spot on his trousers. "This suit was certainly worth the money. Trust you to know material."

the Manager

Illustrated by
CHARLES CHICKERING

Mrs. Beasley whispered, tragically: "Bill, where did you get that dog? Look at me! No—in the eye!"

He was unable to do so, but mumbled rebelliously: "We needed a dog for—for emergencies."

Young Mrs. Beasley put a hand over her heart. "You lied to me! There isn't any Joe Jones, and we've been robbing our children to feed that monster. Taking food out of our babies' mouths, depriving them of a college education—"

"We haven't any children!" cried Mr. Beasley. His back was to the wall, and he expected it to fall on him.

"Not yet. Didn't we both agree to wait and save until we could afford it? Didn't you?"

"Yes, but—"

"And you throw that money away on a dog, after all my care and management!" And Mrs. Beasley burst into tears.

HER husband cried desperately: "I tell you I couldn't help it! You know how Tink looks up at you! I told the man you wouldn't stand for it, but he explained they were a little hard to sell in the city, because people want small dogs. So I could have Tink on approval, because he could see we were meant for each other, and—"

Mrs. Beasley sobbed. "He eats more than triplets. How can you pretend to love me, and do things like this? Forty-six dollars and eighteen cents!"

"Baby, baby, please don't cry," begged Mr. Beasley. "I got him for only twenty-five bucks, because people in—"

She shook his hand off her shoulder, weeping harder than ever. "Don't touch me! You said your pocket had been picked! You liar!"

Turning wildly from her tearful accusing face, Mr. Beasley cried: "All right, then! I'll take him back!"

He rushed into the yard. Tink leaned lovingly against him, and Mr. Beasley's hands trembled as he fastened collar and leash. They went through the gate at a run, not because Mr. Beasley wanted to, but the dog did.

At ten P.M. they returned. Tink barked to let Mrs. Beasley know he'd brought her man back safely, and she switched on the porch-light and opened the door. Tink kissed her hand as he entered the house, and Mr. Beasley followed, looking down at his shoes.

"Fellow wouldn't be open now," he mumbled. "Tomorrow."

Mrs. Beasley said: "Sit down on the couch. I made some chocolate."

He raised his head hopefully when she brought the cup. Her eyes were red, her smile moist, and Mr. Beasley offered tentatively: "I could take him back tomorrow."

"If you'd come home alone, I wouldn't have let you in," said Mrs. Beasley.

MR. Beasley placed the cup on the floor; she sat on his lap; and Tink came to drink the chocolate.

"The fool eats anything," giggled Mrs. Beasley, and then sighed. "I might just as well throw away that old budget."

"We could have an envelope for him," suggested Mr. Beasley. "And I'll quit smoking."

"You will not! The budget won't be much good, anyhow. So many little things you don't foresee. And if you plan for the future forever, what have you got? I thought it all out while you were gone."

Mr. Beasley said, "Oh," vaguely.

"Why shouldn't Mike work his way through college the way you did? And Patty might get married the way I did."

"What?" Mr. Beasley sounded bewildered.

"Every child should have a dog," Mrs. Beasley went on firmly. "And as long as we've got the dog. . . . I mean, we might as well be logical."

She kissed him. Mr. Beasley said: "Oh!"

After that, conversation practically stopped.

Bill mumbled rebelliously: "We needed a dog for—for emergencies."

Three Strikes

by COMMANDER EDWARD L. BEACH, USN

SUBMARINE *versus* submarine! The hunter hunted! The biggest fear in the hearts and minds of our submarine sailors during World War II was that an enemy submarine might get the drop on them while they were making a passage on the surface, and torpedo them. It would be quite simple to do, really. All you have to do is to detect the other fellow first, either by sight or radar, submerge on his track, and let go the deadly fish as he passes. *All you have to do is detect him first!*

Our submarines ran around the coast of Japan as though they were in their own back yards. They usually deigned to patrol submerged only when within sight of the enemy shoreline in order not to be spotted by shore watchers or aircraft patrols, for you can't sink ships which stay in port because they know you are waiting outside. But when out of sight of land, and when there were no planes about, United States submarines usually remained on the surface. Thus they increased their search radius, and the speed with which they could move to new positions. And it should not be forgotten that the fifty-odd boats doing lifeguard duty at the end of the war were required to stay on the surface whether they were in sight of land or not!

Small wonder that our submarine lookouts were the best in the Navy! You fight twice as hard, and you look twice as hard, if your own life depends on it. United States submariners were, as a class, far too well acquainted with the devastating surprise which can be dealt out with a pair of well-aimed torpedoes to take any preventable risk of being on the receiving end themselves! Submarines are ruggedly built ships, but they have so little reserve buoyancy that a torpedo hit is certain to cause enough water to flood in to overbalance the remaining buoyancy. Even though the submarine might be otherwise intact, she would instantly sink to the bottom of the sea with most of her crew trapped inside. The *Tang*, hit by one of her own torpedoes, sank in 180 feet of water; because of this relatively shallow depth some, though pitifully few, of her crew managed to escape.* Ordinarily there are no survivors from sunken submarines, with the exception of the Germans, who had a habit of surfacing and abandoning ship when under attack.

The submarine, which hunts by stealth, is therefore itself peculiarly susceptible to attack by stealth. But don't make the mistake of underestimating the enemy submarine crew. The fact that they are operating a submarine at all indicates that they are picked men, who know as much about the game, in all probability, as you do. The odds are definitely even, and it is a question of dog eat dog, where the only advantage lies in superior ability and equipment.

Not counting midgets, the first Japanese submarine sunk by our forces was the I-173, which fell victim to the *Gudgeon*, on January 27, 1942. The last such was sunk by the *Spikefish* on August 13, 1945. Between these dates twenty-three additional Japanese subs were destroyed by our undersea warriors. And we regret to chronicle that approximately five of our own subs, it is thought, went down under the periscope sights of Japanese submarines.

UNFORTUNATELY, the Jap records are so poor that the precise manner in which all of our lost subsurface vessels met their doom will never be discovered. The fact remains that our submariners were convinced that the Japs were sending the little two-man midgets out at night, looking for them. And almost every patrol report turned in by our people records that one or more torpedoes had been fired at them.

Perhaps the most outstanding record, in point of enemy submersibles sunk, was the one hung up by *Batfish* in February, 1945. During the space of four days, between the ninth and thirteenth of February, three Japanese submarines were sunk by her well-aimed torpedoes. In each case, *Batfish* saw them first, and naturally made sure that the enemy did not see her at all. In each case she tracked the enemy submarine, gained a favorable attack position, and still completely undetected herself, consummated a successful and of course deadly attack. In two cases the enemy sub apparently became suspicious toward the latter stages of the approach, but *Batfish* outwitted all three, with the result that all shortly joined their ancestors.

ON December 30th, 1944, USS *Batfish* got under way from Pearl Harbor on what was to be her sixth war patrol. It was also to be one of the epoch-making patrols of the war, one whose influence may be discerned even to this late date. Her skipper was Commander J. K. Fyfe, a Naval Academy graduate of the class of 1936, who had already built up an outstanding record of successful action against the foe. From the time when the PC boat escorting her was dismissed until she arrived at Guam, Jake Fyfe kept his ship at flank speed. He, in common with most submariners, saw no reason for delaying getting into the war zone, except the necessity of conserving fuel. The capture of Guam removed that necessity, in so far as the first leg of the trip was concerned. After leaving Guam or Saipan, it usually paid to be a little conservative, in case you ran into a long chase, or were given a prolonged special mission.

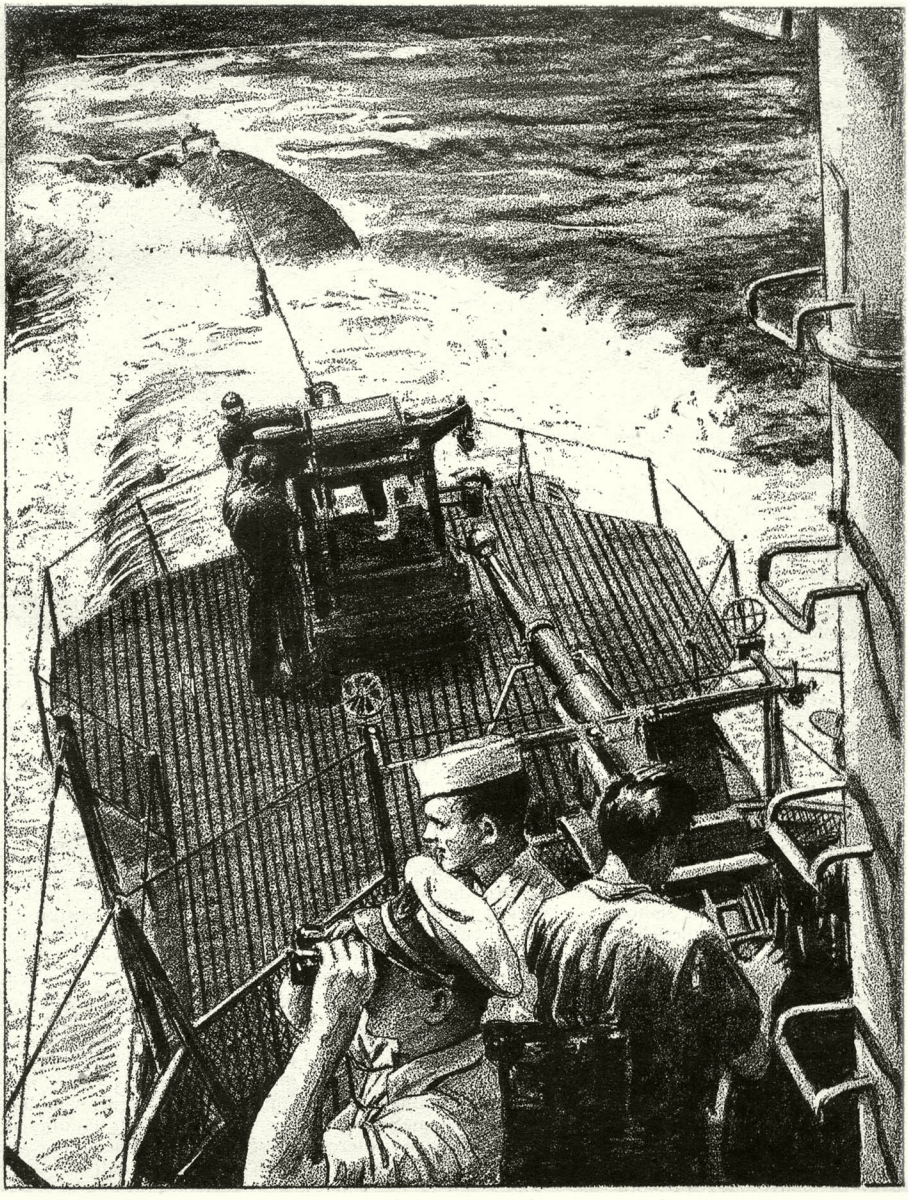
On January 9th, 1945, *Batfish* arrived at Guam, and on the next day she departed, *en route* to an area north of the Philippines. On the 12th of January she sighted what was probably her first enemy contact on this particular patrol, presaging the turn which the whole patrol would subsequently take. A periscope suddenly popped out of the water some distance ahead. Since you don't stick around to argue with an enemy submarine which has the drop on you, and since, besides, Jake was in a hurry to get to the area where he was scheduled for immediate lifeguard service, he simply bent on everything she would take, and got out of there. One rather obvious example of the vital necessity for keeping a

* "*Tang* Completes a Mission" by Edward L. Beach, November, 1948, BLUE BOOK.

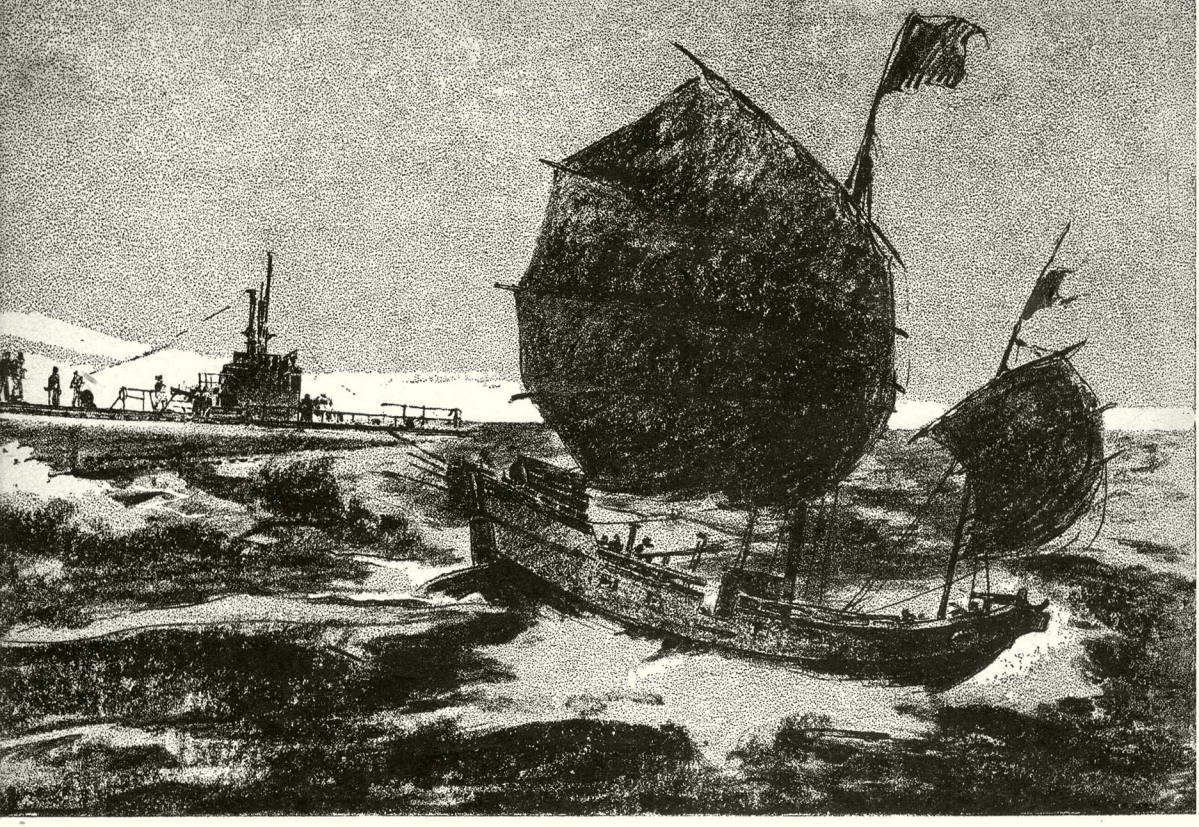
for Batfish

Illustrated by FREDERIC ANDERSON

THIS TWELFTH FACT STORY OF THE SUBMARINE WARFARE (WRITTEN BY ADMIRAL CHRISTIE, COMMANDER BEACH AND OTHERS) WHICH BLUE BOOK HAS PRINTED SINCE THE CLOSE OF THE WAR, IS IN MANY WAYS THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY OF ALL; FOR IT DESCRIBES THE WEIRD GROPING AND SHOOTING IN THE DARK WHICH ENABLED BATFISH, UNDER COMMANDER FYFE, TO SINK THREE ENEMY SUBMARINES IN FOUR DAYS.



Though Fyfe doubted there could be survivors, he was determined to give them a chance for their lives.



The damaged junk now lay within easy range, and Jake headed his Batfish toward her.

good lookout watch! Sightings of Japanese periscopes by our boats were fairly numerous during the war. The Japs never learned how *doubly* cautious you must be, when stalking one of your own kind; we never learned a lesson better.

On January 13th *Batfish* received word that several aviators were in the water not far from her track; the next two days were spent in fruitless search, assisted by friendly planes. Although an empty life raft and life jacket were sighted, no survivors were ever seen. On January 16th, delayed two days by her unsuccessful search, *Batfish* entered her area.

Nothing of note occurred for the next few days, except the sighting of two floating mines (ninety-five per cent submerged, of course)—another example of alert lookouts—and another report of downed aviators. These last had been in the water for a long time, however, and the weather had worsened to the extent that their survival was doubtful. Nevertheless, Fyfe stuck around for two days looking for them, and riding out the mounting storm.

On the morning of January 23rd a convoy of many small ships was detected on the radar, and as dawn was breaking, *Batfish* dived and went to battle stations. Jake Fyfe intended to have a look-see before committing himself, but he was ready for anything. After all, these waters abounded in Japanese anti-submarine activity. Shortly after it became light enough to see through the periscope, the submarine boiled to the surface again. The targets had been identified as junks, but since they were traveling in waters which were under Japanese domination, there seemed to be a good possibility that they were carrying contraband for the enemy, and *Batfish* was going to investigate.

Twenty-eight junks of various descriptions were in sight. When they sighted the submarine, they crowded on sail to escape, and totally ignored her attempts to cause them to heave to. A couple of shots across the bow of the nearest one had no effect whatsoever, and then Jake Fyfe went to work in earnest. He maneuvered close alongside the fellow across whose bow he had fired, and commenced to fire into him, aiming all shots low, so as to do maximum damage to the hull and minimum damage to personnel. After all, Fyfe was not interested in killing a few poor Chinese or Japanese junk sailors, but he *was* interested in what kind of cargo they were carrying.

It is quite amazing to watch a fleet-type submarine at battle stations surface. For a ship of her size and displacement, she is lightly armed, true, but not much of her shows above the water, and what guns she carries are brilliantly served. Moving in to close range on the junk, *Batfish* appeared to be a single sheet of flame, as the staccato stutter of her multiple automatic guns crackled out over the water. Interposed with these was the heavier and more solid *boom—boom—boom—boom* of the slower-firing five-inch short-barreled rifle on the main deck aft. Nearly every shot told in the wooden hull of the junk. One mast was seen to fall over the side, and she obviously would shortly be reduced to a mass of splinters.

At this juncture the other vessels were observed to be heaving to, and Fyfe gave the cease-fire order, his immediate object accomplished. He then maneuvered alongside four of the undamaged junks and boarded them; they were all harmless fishermen, evidently trying to eke out a miserable existence under Jap domination. Whole families of men, women, and children were aboard each junk visited, all visibly frightened. Since a thorough search could reveal nothing except a "few days' catch of fish of

various and unappetizing types," to borrow Fyfe's description, he sent below for some cans of beans, some bread, and a bag or two of rice, which were handed over to each ship searched to make up for the scare they had received.

ALL this time the damaged junk lay within easy range, and after boarding and searching the fourth vessel, Jake headed his *Batfish* toward her. By this time he was convinced that they had indeed been harmless, but the damage he had done to them and their ship was commencing to worry him. Upon coming alongside it was discovered that his precaution in firing at the waterline, and his quickness in ceasing fire, had prevented serious damage. True, there were several holes in the hull, and one mast was down—testimonials to the accurate fire of his crew; but no Chinese was seriously injured, although two men had received an aggregate of three flesh wounds. None of this appeared to bother the Chinamen, although they did, by signs, ask for help in treating the wounded. *Batfish's* pharmacist's mate was ready with his little bag of b..ndages and first-aid material, and he immediately transferred to the junk and proceeded to take charge of the situation. As Fyfe put it: "He had two good patients, and I'll never forget the demonstration I had of plain intestinal fortitude. One, an old man, had a wound in his thigh, and didn't even flicker an eyelash while it was being treated. The other had two wounds, one in his back and one in his arm, but he was the most active person aboard."

With the wounded men as comfortable as possible, major damage hastily repaired with the help of *Batfish's* willing boarding party, and their larder stocked far beyond their wildest dreams, the junk finally was cast off, amid much bowing and scraping and signs of undying friendship.

Ten minutes after leaving the last junk, a Jap patrol plane was sighted, and the submarine dived.

FOR several days nothing more of note occurred, which is not infrequently the way with a submarine war patrol. You have to be philosophical about the inactivity, and ready to make the most of what chances come your way.

On the 31st of January and the 1st of February, *Batfish* played tag with a small merchant ship as she entered and left the port of Yulin, in Tonkin Gulf, but no good chance for a shot presented itself, and the target got away. This was a big disappointment, only partially made up for on the 4th of February when a Japanese landing barge was sighted coming up the coast on a northerly course.

It was too rough for accurate gunfire, and huge seas rolling over the submarine's low-lying deck interdicted use of the five-inch gun mounted there. Rain and the approach of darkness also hampered Fyfe's gun crews. Nevertheless they methodically set to work, and in the space of a short time, though rather long by their standards, all return fire from the landing barge was silenced, and the barge itself was sinking. The action was broken off when it became too dark and rainy to see the target at a range of one hundred yards. Five more days of routine patrolling followed, unrelieved by any sort of activity to break the monotony except occasional aircraft contacts.

On the 9th of February *Batfish* was patrolling in Babuyan Channel, south of Camiguin Island. This time it is not the lookouts, but the radar operator who sounds the first warning. Something in his radar arouses his attention—he looks closely—there it is again—and again! It is not a "pip" which he sees; if it were, he would not wait to sing out "Radar contact," and thereby immediately mobilize the ship for action.

This is something rather more difficult to evaluate. A faint shimmering of the scopes—a momentary unsteadiness in the green and amber cathode-ray tubes—which comes and goes. Unconsciously, almost, he times them, and notices the bearing upon which the radar head is trained each time the faint wabble in the normal presentation is noticed. A few moments of this, and his hair nearly stands on end! *"Captain to the conn!"* He rasps the words out! No time to wait on ceremony. This particular lad wants his skipper, and he wants him badly!

A split second later the word reaches Jake Fyfe in his stateroom (the only such in the ship, by the way), where he had lain down fully clothed for a few minutes of shut-eye. In a moment the skipper is in the conning tower.

"What is it?" He forces himself to speak calmly. And calm he is, too. You can't make out very long in this game unless you can keep your nerves under control—but at the same time you have to be quick as a cat. Many times the hair-trigger judgment and instantaneous correct action of the skipper or the officer-of-the-deck have been able to avert what would otherwise have been disaster.

The radar operator points to his 'scope. "There it is, sir! There it is again! I just noticed it a minute ago!" The operator is doing himself an injustice; from the time he first noticed there was something out of the ordinary to the moment Fyfe himself was beside him could not have been over thirty seconds.

The Captain stares at the instrument, weighing the significance of what he sees. This is something new, something portentous—there is a small stirring in the back of his mind—there seems to be a half-remembered idea there, if he can only dredge it back up. . . . Suddenly, like a flash, he has it! If he is right, it means they are in grave danger, with a chance to come out of it and maybe add another scalp to their belts; if he is wrong, what he is about to do may make a bad situation infinitely worse! But Jake knows what he is doing. He is not playing some far-fetched hunch. The situation indicates only one thing to his acutely sensitized brain:

"SECURE the radar!" he orders. There is just enough snap in his voice to cause the operator to reach to the cut-off switch and snap it off before looking questioningly at his skipper.

"What do you think it is?" Fyfe asks the lad—for, like so many of our submarine sailors during the war, he *is* only a lad, still in his teens.

"It looked to me like another radar, Captain!" The reply is given without hesitation.

"What else?"

"Well, it bore about southwest, I think."

"Right! Two-twenty, to be exact, as nearly as we can tell. But what else?"

The boy is at a loss for an answer, and Jake Fyfe answers his own question: "Japanese submarine!"

And with his radar operator, and indeed the whole conning tower watch section staring at him, upon hearing this startling deduction, he then crisply orders:

"Battle stations, torpedo!"

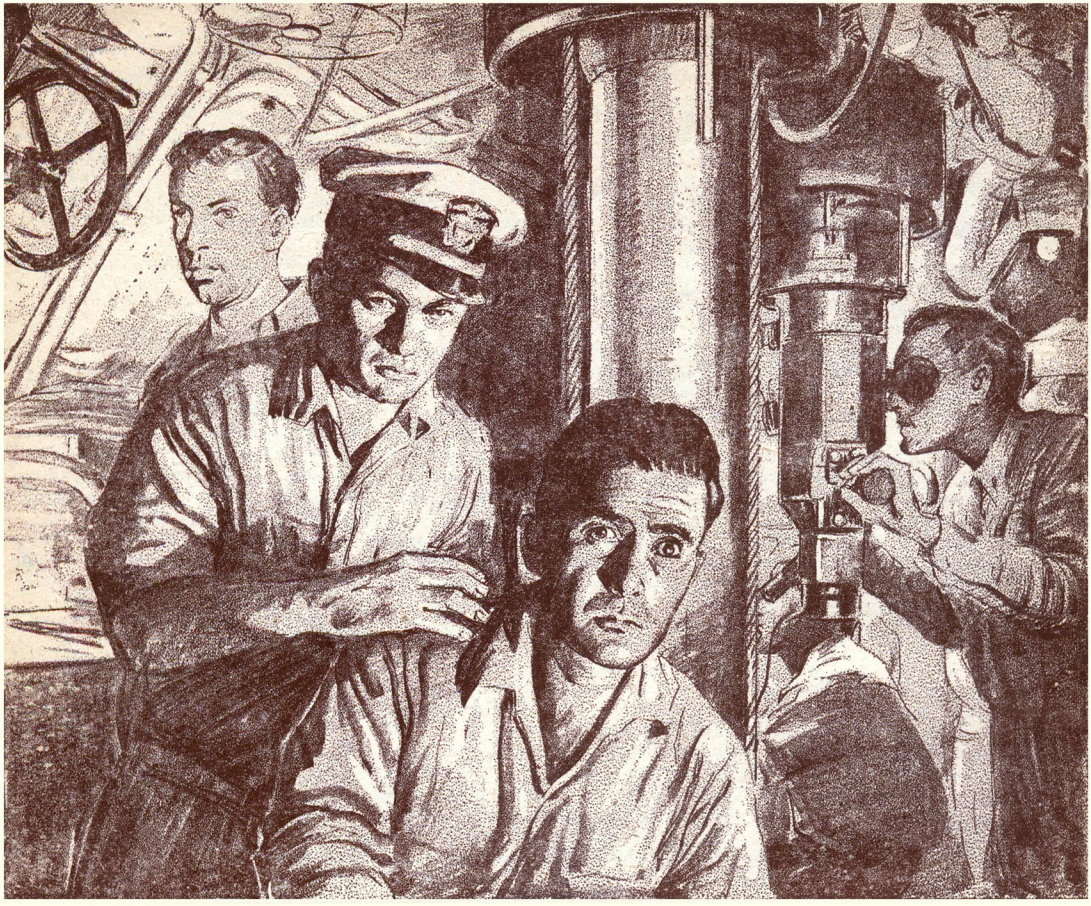
The helmsman had instinctively already extended his hand in the direction of the general alarm. Now he grasps it, pulls it out, and then down. The low-pitched chime of the alarm resounds through the ship, penetrating every corner, waking men who had turned in dead tired, vowing to sleep for a year—meaning only until their next watch—sending the adrenalin coursing through their bloodstream, bringing them upright, fully alert, instinctively racing to their battle stations, all in the space of an instant.

"What is it? What is it?" they whisper to each other, even as they run to their stations.

"Don't know. Something on the radar. The skipper's in the conning tower."

"Something on the radar! Something funny on the radar—the skipper turned our radar off—he says there's a Jap sub out there. How does he know that?"

As a matter of fact, the process of deduction by which Fyfe arrived at the conclusion that the source of the radar peculiarities was an enemy submarine was not at all illogical. The wavering of his radar scope was probably due to the presence of another radar. It was



"There it is, sir! There it is again! I just noticed it a minute ago!"

known that the Japs had radar, though of an inferior type to ours. If this radar came from a vessel as large as a destroyer, he should have been detected on *Batfish's* radar before the emanations from his low-powered radar had been noticed. This was, of course, the usual case. Since the radar waves had been the first to be picked up, it followed that the ship producing them must be small, and low on the water. Yet it must be a valuable ship, sufficiently important to rate one of the relatively few radar sets the Nips possessed. *Hence a submarine!*

The reason why Fyfe ordered his own radar temporarily secured was simply to deny the Jap the same information which he himself had just received, while he and his executive officer, Lieutenant C. K. Sprinkle, USNR, broke out the charts and did a little very rapid figuring.

The enemy radar emanations have been from 220° True. Babuyan Channel runs more or less north and south. Therefore the target must be on a northerly course, approaching from the south.

To check this deduction, *Batfish's* radar is cautiously turned on, for only a moment. Sure enough, the bearing of the other radar has changed slightly. It is now 225° T.

"All ahead full! Right full rudder!" *Batfish* leaps ahead, and steadies on a course calculated to get to the north of the approaching enemy vessel. She runs for a short time, every now and then checking the situation with her radar. All clear—no other ships around. Just the Jap, and his signals are becoming stronger, and his bearing is now drawing to the southward. This is as it should be.

But Fyfe does not, of course, propose to make his approach and attack on bearings alone. He wants to close the range, but on his own terms, with his bow on the enemy, his torpedoes ready; in short, with the drop on him.

Finally, Jake Fyfe and Sprinkle figure their position is about right. *Batfish* turns toward the enemy, and commences to ghost in, keeping the darkest section of the midnight horizon behind her, and sweeping frequently, but at odd intervals, with her radar.

Radar Contact! The word from the radar this time startles nobody—they have all been expecting it for several minutes. The tracking party now goes to work in earnest, with some concrete information to base upon, instead of the rather sporadic and unprecise dope they have had up to now.

Target is on course 310° True, speed twelve. The dials whirl on the TDC in the conning tower, where Sprinkle is in charge.

The range continues to decrease, the radar operator and the TDC operator tirelessly feeding in the essential information on the fire-control instruments. The plotting party also has its part in this, for all solutions must check before torpedoes may be fired.

On the bridge, the Captain strains his eyes, and so do the lookouts up there with him. Suppose the Jap has somehow learned of the presence of

the American submarine! It is possible that he might have. In this case, if he deduces what is going on, he might very logically turn the situation to his own advantage by firing his own torpedoes first. After all, when you make an approach on another ship, there is a period during which you are in a much better position for him to shoot torpedoes at you than you at him—at a somewhat longer range, of course. Or, more probably, he might simply dive, thus spoiling the shot *Batfish* has worked so long for, not to mention making it imperative for her to get right out of there!

Closer and closer comes the unsuspecting enemy ship. It is so dark that as yet she cannot be seen by the tensely looking bridge party. As the situation develops, it is apparent that she will pass through the firing position at just under two thousand yards range. This is a little long for optimum torpedo fire, but Fyfe desires to take no chances of being detected. On he comes, only a little more, now; then, from the conning tower: "On the firing bearing, Captain!" This from Exec Sprinkle.

"Let them go when ready, Sprink. Shoot on radar bearings. I still can't see him from up here." This from the Skipper.

Silently four torpedoes are loosed into the water. Four new wakeless electric "fish" start their run toward the target. They have 1800 yards to go; it will take a while. The watch hands crawl slowly and maddeningly around their faces. The wait grows longer, more anxious. *Something should have happened by now! Those fish should surely have arrived! We could not have been so far off that our spread missed also!*

But miss they did, all four torpedoes. Finally there was no escaping that conclusion. The whole careful and well-executed approach—wasted! All hands are bitterly disappointed What can have gone wrong?

THE question is answered by plot, dramatically. "Target has speeded up! Speed now fourteen knots!" Too bad it was not detected a minute or two earlier. At least this explains the trouble, and allays the suspicious doubts which had already, inevitably, commenced to crop up in the minds of both skipper and exec.

But the target continues serenely on her way, giving no sign of being aware of having been fired upon. Maybe *Batfish* will be able to try again!

No sooner thought than tried. The four murmuring Diesels of the hunter lift their song of power, and the submarine slips away through the water, seeking another position from which to launch her deadly missiles.

By this time, of course, the target has passed beyond *Batfish,* and in order to regain firing position it will be necessary to execute what is known as an "end around"—that is, run completely around the target at high speed, being careful all the while not to approach close enough to be detected, and finally reach a point up ahead of him again. This takes considerably longer than a stern chase, for you have to run a lot farther. But it is the only way a submarine can use her high surface speed to get into attack position. Submerged, a World War II submarine may be considered virtually stationary.

Jake Fyfe had, however, elected to remain on the surface for the whole attack, trusting to his superior radar, to the fact that he had been alerted before the Jap, and to his belief that he could keep the enemy from detecting him. His plan, briefly, was to get up ahead of the other submarine, and to head in toward him while the unsuspecting Nip was pelting likewise in nearly the opposite direction. Thus the range would close awfully fast, and the amount of warning the other submarine could expect before torpedo junction would be very little.

But, to Fyfe's surprise, the Jap sub had given no indication of having become aware that he had been shot at. Whereas Fyfe had expected only one chance at him, he now found another. "Obviously the fellow isn't as good as I gave him credit for!" Thus ran the thoughts of *Batfish's* skipper. And concurrent with this came the resolution to get in closer the next time, play his luck a little harder. If he could only sight the enemy, and fire on optical bearings instead of radar bearings, he would not only be certain of his identity, but would have a much more neat and tidy solution to his fire-control problem—and thus greater certainty of hitting.

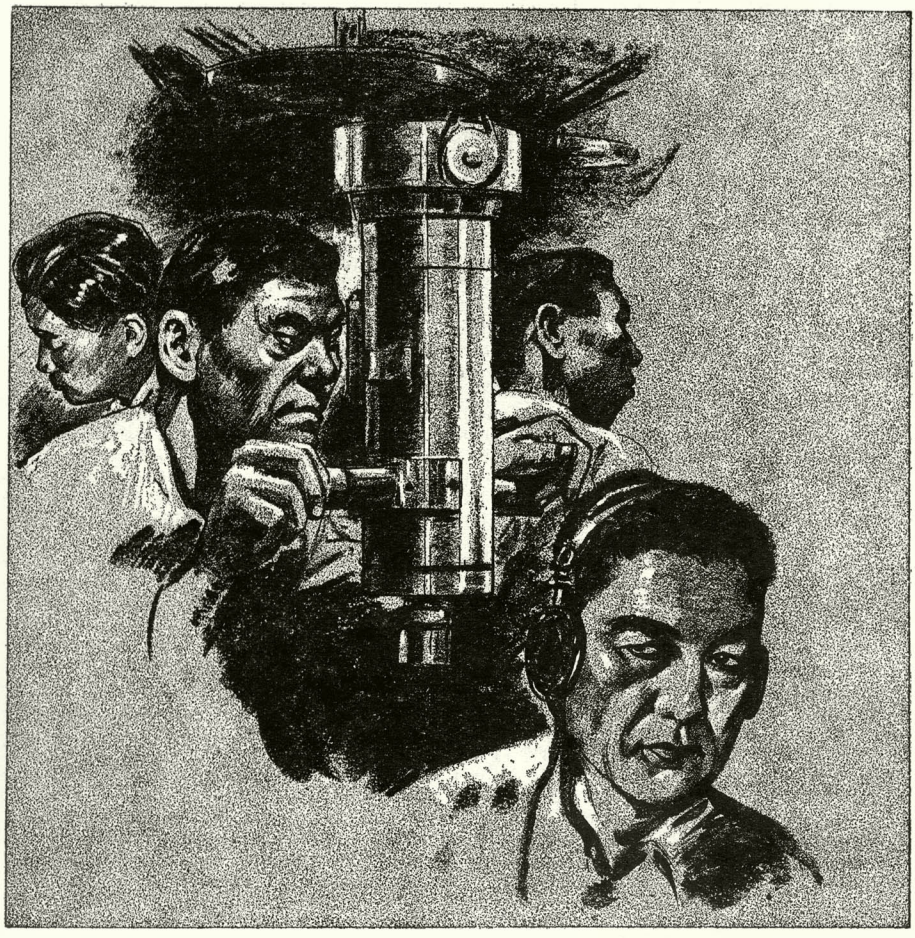
And besides, though Jake was morally certain the ship he was stalking was another submarine—and therefore Japanese, for he knew positively there were no friendly submarines in that area—he naturally wanted very badly to see him anyway, just by way of confirming things. He had thought that visibility was good enough to see two thousand yards—a mile—and therefore had settled on about 1800 yards for firing range. Events had proved him too optimistic, and he had not been able to see him at that range. This time, he mentally determined, he *would* get a look!

All this time, *Batfish* is racing through the black night at full speed. She has pulled off abeam of her quarry, just within radar range in order to be outside range of the less efficient radar carried by the enemy, and she is rapidly overhauling her. Jake is still very careful with his own radar, searching carefully all around and getting a radar range and bearing on the enemy as frequently as he dares, but he is not going to take a chance on being detected in the same manner in which he originally spotted the other! All this time, of course, the radar emanations from the Jap have been coming in regularly, and their unchanged characteristics add proof that the Nip is still sound asleep.

The skipper stands on the bridge of his ship during the whole of the new approach. Although he would like very much to go below for a few moments to check on how his boys are doing, he feels this is not possible in this instance. The situation could change so radically and so quickly that he must remain where he can take the immediate action which might be required. So he must trust the coördination of everything below decks to Sprinkle, who has made many war patrols but has never been executive officer before. However, Jake has confidence in Sprinkle, who so far has given every indication that he knows what he is about.

BATFISH has worked up somewhat ahead of the enemy's beam, still booming ahead on four Fairbanks-Morse Diesel engines with throttles jammed wide open. Fyfe is trying to visualize in his mind the chart of the channel they are racing in, for if he remembers rightly, some kind of a change is going to have to be made, at the rate they are moving. The sea is fairly smooth, as it so often is in these southern waters, and hardly any solid water comes over *Batfish's* main deck, though considerable spray is whipped across it by the wind of her passing. It is an absolutely pitch-black night. No distinction can be seen between sky and water—the horizon simply doesn't exist. All about is warm, dank, murky grayness, broken only by the fact of the white water boiling along the side. It is as though *Batfish* were standing still, dipping and rising slightly, and shaking herself free occasionally from the angry sea frothing and splashing beneath her. Back aft, four grey-white plumes of smoke and steam pour from the four exhaust pipes in the submarine's low sides, rise upward and widen as they become less distinct, and finally merge into one large and rapidly dissipating blob of haze. The roiled water in the wake of the ship stands out astern like a piece of white chalk drawn on a dark tablecloth—straight, severe, unchanging—and very short, as it rapidly fades away into the bulky darkness all around.

There is no noise, except the rush of the wind in your ears, the swish of the water along the side of the chariot bridge, and the purposeful roar of the Diesel engines. To one standing on the deck directly above the engine rooms this roar would sound quite amazingly loud; for after all, you have about half again the power of the big-



The Jap was keeping a better watch than Fyfe had given him credit for. Now Batfish *is being hunted.*

gest Diesel locomotive down under there; but to the grim crew on *Batfish's* crowded bridge, the sound comes only as a low-pitched comforting engine noise which they can tuck away into their subconscious and forget about—unless something happens to stop or change it.

But although all of this adds to the impression which each of those persons will carry with him to his dying day, it is all buried in the subconscious. Fyfe has only one thing on his mind—which is to say that he has to have all things there, for he is the mastermind. Sprinkle, some day to get his own ship, is a sort of secondary mastermind. The problem at hand is to figure out what the target is likely to do, and then to play your actions accordingly. Both Captain and executive officer are wrestling with the same thing, but it is Sprinkle, who has the charts at hand and who can turn on a dim light to study them, who comes up with the answer.

"Captain, Fuga Island is about twenty miles ahead. The target is going to have to change course to go around it. I think he'll change to the right, toward us, because it's much the easier way around, and gives him clear water ahead on his course, once he's past it." Sprinkle has climbed part way up the ladder leading to the bridge, and is talking to the Skipper with his head in the hatchway.

"I was just wondering about that, Sprink," replies Fyfe. "What course do you think he'll change to?"

"About 020° True would be a pretty good course for him, I think. If he were to change right now, he'd pass about ten miles abeam of the island. That would put us only about three thousand yards off the track, though, and too close to start in right then."

"Guess you're right," muses the Skipper. "What do you think we ought to do?"

SPRINKLE has the answer for that one too. "The longer he waits before changing, the better it will be for us. As soon as plot shows a change of course, I think we should come to 020 ourselves, and run on up ahead of him. Then, when we have him all buttoned down on the new course, we turn around and wait for him."

That is precisely the scheme Fyfe has been turning over in his mind also. "Okay, Clark. Let's try to get three thousand yards off the track and ten thousand yards ahead. Then we'll turn toward and start in. But I don't want to shoot until one thousand yards this time. I want to make sure of the bastard. He's bound to wise up sooner or later, and our luck can't last for ever."

"Right!" And Clark Sprinkle disappears back down the hatch.

A moment later his voice is heard on the interior communication system: "Plot says target is changing course now! They'll let us know for sure in a minute."

The Skipper presses a large heavy button on the bulkhead beside him, and leans forward so as to speak into the depth-chargeproof bridge speaker: "Fine! As soon as you're sure, we'll change too."

In the conning tower, which is the master tracking and fire-control station, the executive officer has the radar operator "buzz" his instrument several times in quick succession, in order to feed the necessary information to the plotting and tracking parties. About a minute later a speaker mounted to the overhead of the conning tower squawks: "This is Plot; Target has changed course to the right. New course, 015."

"I've got the same, Sprink," says the TDC operator. "New course about 020, though."

Sprinkle pulls a portable microphone toward him, presses the button. "Bridge, plot and TDC have the target on new course between 015 and 020. Suggest we come to 020."

"Right full rudder! Come right to new course zero two zero!" The order to the helm is sufficient acknowledgement.

"Rudder is right full, sir! Coming to zero two zero!" The helmsman bawls out the answer up the hatch. He has to shout, to make sure the bridge personnel can hear.

BATFISH heels to port, as she whips around. Her white wake astern shows nearly a sharp right angle turn, as her stern slides across the seas under the impetus of the hard-over rudder. When a ship turns, she usually twists around a point well forward, handles much as an auto does while backing.

As the new course is approached, the helmsman slowly takes rudder off until only a little left rudder is necessary to keep her from swinging past. "Steady on zero two zero!" Once again he shouts up the hatch.

Several more minutes pass. Fyfe is on the point of asking for more information, when again the bridge speaker blares its muffled version of Sprinkle's voice: "Captain, we've got him on 020 True, making fourteen knots. Range is seven thousand, and distance to the track twenty-five hundred. This looks pretty good to me. Recommend we come left and let him have it!"

"Okay, Sprink. Give me a good course to come to. We want to keep our bow on him, remember, to cut down the silhouette." The Captain's voice has assumed a grim finality, a flat quality of emotionless decision. This is always a big hurdle; up until now you really have the option of fighting or not fighting—of risking your neck or not—that is, provided you remain undetected. But when you start in, you are committed. You go in with the bow of your ship pointed directly at the enemy; you get well inside his visibility range, and radar range too, for that matter; and you depend upon the quickness with which the attack develops to give you the opportunity to get it off.

Keeping your bow on him gives him less to look at, and that's a very important factor in the night surface attack; but if you change your mind and try to pull out of there, you've got to change course, give him your broadside—and set yourself up for a beautiful counter-attack on his part. Destroyers are supposed to be able to get a half-salvo in the air within seconds after having been alerted; submarines always carry one or two torpedoes at the ready, which can be fired instantly from the bridge. Small wonder that starting in is a crucial decision!

"Left full rudder!" Fyfe's command whips down the conning-tower hatch to the helmsman.

"Rudder is left full, sir!"

"All ahead two-thirds!" Fyfe has waited just a moment before slowing, in order to make the turn faster.

"Answered all ahead two-thirds!" Maneuvering room has matched annunciators with the conning tower, thus indicating that they have the word. The full-throated roar of the four Diesels dies away to about half its previous intensity, and the four plumes of exhaust reduce perceptibly.

This time, because of the reduced speed, *Batfish* does not heel over as much as the last time, but heel she does, to starboard, and she digs her bow deep into the sea as her following wake overtakes her and forces her stern up.

Sprinkle has been following things closely from the conning tower, checking bearings, ranges, courses and speeds. He performs a rapid mathematical computation, drawing arrows this way and that, and measuring angles. Then he speaks into his little mike: "Captain, if we steady up on 240, we'll have him ten degrees on our port bow, going across. His angle on the bow is now starboard forty."

"Steady on new course two four zero!" The ship has about thirty degrees more to swing, and the helmsman commences to ease the rudder upon receipt of the command from the bridge.

"Steady on two four zero, sir!"

The executive officer speaks again. "Captain, he is on course zero two oh, making fourteen knots. Angle on the bow is starboard forty-five, and he now bears five degrees on our port bow. The distance to the track is two three double oh. Range five thousand."

No answer from the bridge, but that doesn't bother Sprinkle. He knows he will hear quickly if the Skipper isn't satisfied with the way things are going or the reports he is getting.

A few more tense moments pass. Again the speaker near the skipper's left elbow reproduces Sprinkle's familiar voice. "He's crossing our bow now. Range four thousand."

"Come right to two five zero." Fyfe, who is working the same problem in his head that Sprinkle is solving mechanically in the conning tower, has the situation firmly fixed in his mind. He wants to keep coming around to head for the enemy, and has anticipated by seconds only the latter's recommendation.

"What is the distance to the track?"

"Two thousand, Captain."

"All ahead one third." *Batfish* is closing the target's projected track too quickly, and the firing range will be too short, or the target might detect her before firing, Fyfe's brain is now in high gear. The tentacles of his nerve fibers reach to every part of the ship, and he can mentally feel every part of the problem falling into place. In fact, it is almost as though he could reach out and control the movements of the enemy commander also; and his mind wills him to keep on the course and speed as set up, to come unerringly and steadily to his doom.

And on and on he comes, totally unaware of the trap set for him, totally unaware that he is springing the trap on himself, that any change whatsoever which he might make would be to his advantage, that the most serious mistake you can make, when it's submarine against submarine, is to relax —*ever*. Of course, to give him his due, the Jap doesn't know he is being shadowed. But he knows very well that he is proceeding through a submarine-infested area—and no excuses are accepted, in this little game.

AT fifteen hundred yards the keen eyes on *Batfish's* bridge distinguish a blur in the gray murk, and at one thousand yards the sinister outline of a Japanese I class submarine is made out—the first time during the whole evening that the enemy has actually been sighted. He wallows heavily in the slight chop of the sea, low, dark, and ungainly. Only his conning tower and bridge can clearly be made out, but his long superstructure and hull are there too, contrasting somberly with the lighter gray of the night sea.

At one thousand yards the Jap is broadside to *Batfish:* Fyfe's plan has borne fruit, for his own bow is exactly toward the enemy, and he has all the advantage of sighting. Furthermore, the darkest portion of the overcast is behind him.

Sprinkle is beside himself with eagerness. For about thirty seconds he has been imploring his Skipper to shoot. He has a perfect solution, and doesn't want to let it get away from him. "We've got them cold! Ready to shoot any time, Captain!" he repeats the same formula over and over, a veteran of too many patrols to say what he really means, which would be more on the order of, *"Let's go, Captain! What are we waiting for!"*

But Fyfe refuses to be hurried. He's worked too long for this moment, and

he has already missed once, possibly because of a little haste in firing. Carefully he takes a bridge bearing, and has it matched into the TDC, swings the Target Bearing Transmitter and takes another, to make sure there is no transmission lag which might cause an error. Then, for the first time using the word, he says, in a curious flat voice: "Fire torpedoes!"

"Fire One!" Sprinkle's voice is one split second behind that of his skipper's. There is a small, scarcely felt jolt, as the impulse air hits the torpedo.

Almost immediately the telephone talker standing under the conning-tower hatch shouts loudly, so that his message is heard in the conning tower as well as on the bridge: *"Number one did not eject! Running hot in the tube!"*

Something has gone wrong. The torpedo should have been pushed out of the torpedo tube by the high-pressure air-ejection system. Instead, it has stuck in the tube, and the torpedomen forward can hear it running in the tube. This is very serious, for it will be armed within a matter of seconds, and then almost anything could set it off. Besides, the motor is overspeeding in the tube, and it could conceivably break up under the strain and vibration—which might itself produce sufficient shock to cause an explosion!

But there isn't time to think much about possibilities. The Skipper's reaction is instant. "Tubes forward, try again, by hand. Use full ejection pressure!" Full pressure is used only when firing at deep submergence, but this is an emergency.

THE next command is for Clark Sprinkle, in the conning tower. "Check fire!" Fyfe is not going to let the Jap get away while he waits for the casualty to be straightened out, but neither does he want the faulty torpedo to be ejected at the same time as a good one, and possibly interfere with it. If it does not eject on the second try, he will shoot the remaining tubes, then return to the balky one.

"Number One tube fired by hand. Tube is clear!" The very welcome report is received after a few anxious seconds, with a profound sense of relief. Only half a dozen seconds have been lost, altogether, and the situation is still good for the remaining "fish."

"Resume fire, Clark!" But the exec has not needed that command. Number Two torpedo is already on its way, followed a few seconds later by Number Three. Torpedoes Four, Five, and Six are held in reserve in case the first salvo misses.

These are electric torpedoes, and therefore wakeless. So Jake Fyfe, on the bridge, does not have the pencil-like wakes of steam and air to mark where his torpedoes have gone. There is a slight disturbance of the surface of the water to show the direction they took, but that is all. Seven pairs of binoculars are trained in the direction of the Jap. Seven pairs of eyes are glued to his low lumbering silhouette and his odd-shaped bridge.

DOWN in the conning tower, the radar operator and the executive officer are staring at their screen, where the blip which is the target is showing up strongly and steadily, showing radar emanations still at the same uninterrupted interval. Suddenly, however, the radar waves become steady, as though the enemy operator had steadied his radar on a just-noticed blip, possibly to investigate it.

"I think he's detected us, sir!" whispers the sailor on the gear. "See—it's steadied on us!"

Sprinkle has also seen. He reaches for the portable mike to tell the Skipper about this new development, his eyes still fixed on the cathode tube face, when he drops it again. Before his eyes the blip has suddenly, astoundingly, grown much larger! It is now nearly twice the size it had been an instant before! Small flashes of light can be seen on the screen, going away from the outsized pip, and disappearing! Then, swiftly, the pip reduces in size and disappears entirely! Nothing is left on the 'scope whatsoever.

At this moment a jubilant shout from the bridge can be heard. "We got him! *We got him!* He blew up and sank!" Sprinkle mops his brow.

The watchers on *Batfish's* bridge had hardly expected anything quite so dramatic as the sight they actually saw. One torpedo had evidently reached the target, and must have hit into a magazine or possibly into a tank carrying gasoline. The Nip sub had simply exploded, with a brilliant red-and-yellow flame which shot high into the night sky, furiously outlined against the somber sober grayness. And as quickly as the flame reached its zenith, it disappeared, as twenty-five hundred tons of broken twisted Japanese steel plunged like a rock for the bottom of the ocean!

There was nothing left for Torpedo Number Three, following a few seconds behind Number Two, to hit, and it passed over the spot where the enemy ship had been, to run on beyond, and finally run down, unexpended.

Batfish immediately proceeded over to the spot where the enemy submarine had sunk, in hopes of picking up a survivor or two, but the effort was hopeless. Undoubtedly all hands had been either killed instantly by the terrific explosion, or had been carried down in the ship. There had been absolutely no chance for anyone not already topside to get out. All Jake Fyfe could find was a large oil slick, extending more than two miles in all directions from the spot where the enemy had last been seen.

Strangely, delighted and happy though he was over his success in destroying the enemy sub, the American skipper felt a few twinges of a peculiar emotion. This was very much like shooting your own kind, despite the proved viciousness and brutality exhibited by some of the enemy—and but for the superiority of his crew and equipment, the victim might have been *Batfish*, instead of HIJMS 1—something. Maybe this was how some of our own submarines who failed to come back met their fates. The other fellow might have got the drop first.

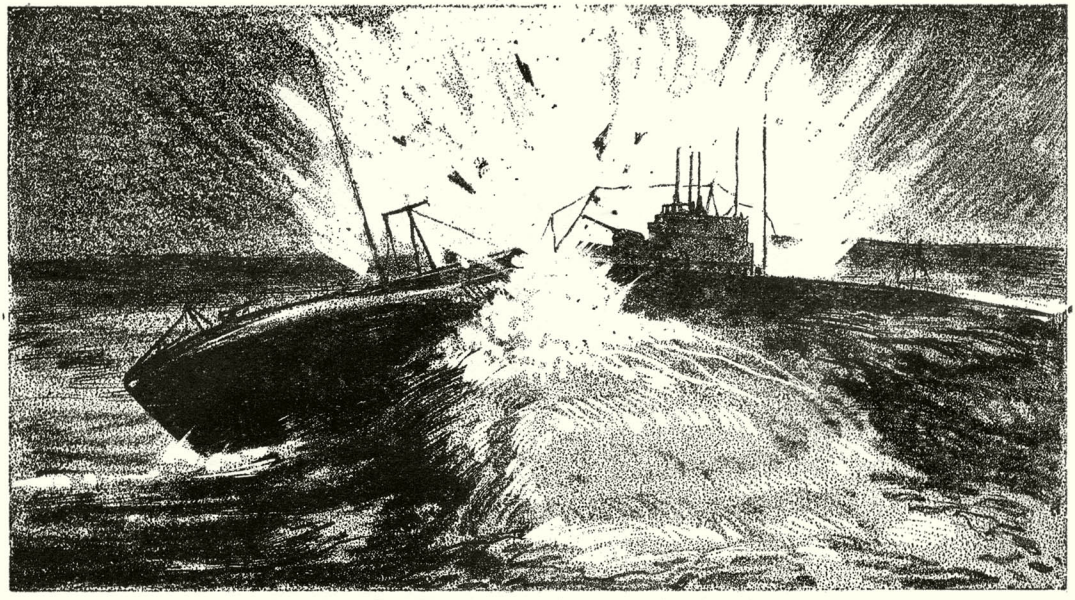
The final attack on the Jap sub had been made at exactly two minutes after midnight, on the morning of February 10th. The remainder of that day passed without much incident, except for one which occurred at ten A.M., and which proved again the necessity for being fast on your feet and using all your senses. *Batfish* had dived shortly before dawn, since the amount of aircraft activity which had already developed by that time made surface patrolling impracticable. At 0947 five planes were sighted through the periscope; one was identified as a patrol plane, the other four as fighters. At 1008 the periscope was raised for another look. Four planes, including the patrol bomber, could be seen, circling close aboard to port. The fifth was not in sight, and was presumably directly overhead. At that moment, sound reported a torpedo running on the port beam, and quick as thought, Fyfe ordered deep submergence. Seconds later, the torpedo passed overhead and went out of hearing range on the starboard quarter. As stated in the patrol report: "This was a very tender moment indeed, and but for the sharp ears of the sound operator, it might have ended disastrously."

NOTHING further of note occurred until an hour or so after sunset on the eleventh. Then, at 1915—

"Captain to the conn!" The Skipper is up there in an instant.

The radar operator points to his radar 'scope. "There's another Jap sub, Captain!"

Sure enough, there, if one watches closely, is the same tiny disturbance which alerted *Batfish* two nights previously. This time there is much less doubt as to what action to take. The same tactics which brought about such signal success on that occasion are immediately placed into effect, as by common consent. The crew is called to battle stations, the tracking parties manned, and all is made ready for a warm reception. The radar party is cautioned—unnecessary precaution—to keep that piece of gear off except when



One torpedo must have hit into a magazine or tank of gas. The Nip sub simply exploded.

a range and bearing are actually required.

If anything, it is even darker than it was on the night of the previous attack. Having found how ineffective the Jap radar really is—or is it simply that the Jap watch standers were asleep?—Fyfe determines to make the same kind of attack as previously, getting as close as possible to the target in order to make certain of his identity.

The same routine is gone through, the same approach procedure, with the exec handling all the details of the fire-control and tracking parties from the conning tower, the Skipper on the bridge doing much the same thing mentally. The situation develops exactly as it had before, except that this submarine is on course southeast instead of northwest. At eighteen hundred yards he is sighted from the bridge of the American submarine. He is making only seven knots, somewhat slower than the other, and it takes him a little longer to reach the firing bearing. Finally all is just about set. Sprinkle has made the "Ready to shoot" report, and Fyfe will let them go in a moment, as soon as the track improves a little, and the range decreases to the optimum. About one minute to go—it won't be long now, chappy—

"Hello, he's dived!" The ejaculation is forced from Fyfe involuntarily. "He dived right on the firing bearing!" Where there had been an enemy submarine, there were only the rolling undulations of the sea. Nothing to do now but get out of there. *Batfish* must have waited too long, and been detected. The Jap was keeping a slightly better watch than Fyfe had given him credit for, and now *Batfish* is being hunted! Just as quickly as that, the whole complexion of the situation has changed. With an enemy submarine known to be submerged within half a mile of you, there is only one of two things to do. Dive yourself, or beat it.

If you dive, you more or less give up the problem, and concentrate on hiding. If you run away on the surface, there is a slight chance that he'll come back up, and that you'll have another shot at him. Jake Fyfe is a stubborn man, and he doesn't give up easily; he immediately discards the idea of diving. "Left full rudder!" he orders instead. His first object is to get away, and his second is to stay in action. Maybe the Jap will assume he has continued running—which is precisely what Jake hopes he will do.

"All ahead flank!" *Batfish's* four powerful Diesel engines come up to full power as one, and the submarine leaps ahead, turning to port as she does so.

The Jap was on a southeasterly course before he dived. Knowing that his periscope must be up and watching his every more, Fyfe orders a northerly course, and *Batfish* roars away from the spot, steadying on a course slightly west of north. Three miles Fyfe lets her run, until he is reasonably sure to be beyond sonar range as well as visual range. Then he alters course to the left, and within a short time arrives at a position *southwest* of the position in which the Jap sub dived.

In the conning tower, at the plotting station, and on the bridge there is some rapid and careful figuring going on. "Give the so-and-so four knots," mutters Sprinkle to himself. "That puts him on this circle. Give him six knots, and he's here. Give him eight knots—oh, hell with eight knots!" Clark Sprinkle's exasperation is almost comic as he grips his pencil in sweaty stubby fingers and tries to decide what he'd do if he were a Jap.

The point is that *Batfish* desires to arrive at some point where she will be assured of getting a moderately long-range radar contact the instant the Nip surfaces, in a position where she will be able to do something about it. *But don't let her spot us through the periscope, or wind up near enough for her to torpedo us while still submerged.* This is where the stuff you learned in school really pays off, brother!

Naturally, *Batfish* cannot afford to remain overly long in the vicinity. Every extra minute she spends there increases by that much the diameter of the circle upon which the enemy may be; and he may even at that very moment be making a periscope approach on you—while you hang around and make it easy for him! But Fyfe has no intentions of making it any easier than he can help. Once he has put his ship in what he has calculated to be a logical spot to await developments, he slows down to one-third speed, about four knots. Then he orders the sound heads rigged out.

"This looks good. Recommend we let him have it!"

You won't catch this boy napping very much. With his stern toward the direction from which the enemy submarine would have to come were he making an attack on *Batfish*, making four knots away from there, he is forcing the Jap to make high submerged speed in order to catch him; he is banking on detecting him by sound before he can get close enough to shoot, or on detecting the torpedo itself if a long-range shot is fired.

But nevertheless all hands realize fully that this is a mighty risky business. You have to play it as smart as you can, but you frequently wind up taking a mighty big chance anyhow.

Twenty minutes pass. Fyfe cannot guess how long the Nip sub will stay down, but his game is to outwait him. If his initial gambit of running away to the northward has fooled him, he'll probably show within an hour after diving. The sound men listen with silent intensity, their headphones glued to their heads. The radar operator scrutinizes his scopes with equal urgency. It would not do to miss any indication.

Suddenly both sound operators look up at the same time. The senior one speaks for both. "Mr. Sprinkle! There's a noise, bearing zero one five!"

Clark is over there in an instant. "What's it like?" He flips on the loudspeaker switch. "Lemme hear it!"

Clearly, a rushing sound can be heard over the loudspeaker, a sort of powerful swishing sound. It changes somewhat in intensity and tone, but remains essentially the same for several seconds, then suddenly stops. Like a flash the executive officer grabs the portable mike. "Captain," he shouts to the bridge, unmindful of the fact that with the lung power he is using no public-address system would have been needed at any type of convention. "Captain! He's blown his tanks, bearing zero one five. He'll be up directly!"

The blast from the bridge speaker nearly blows everyone off the bridge, for Sprinkle has a powerful voice. All binoculars are immediately turned to the bearing given. But the black night conceals its secrets well. Nothing can be seen.

At this juncture the bridge speaker blares again. "Radar contact, zero one eight. That's him, all right!"

The Japanese submarine has surfaced, apparently convinced that all is clear, and is evidently going to continue on his way. *Batfish* is to get another chance. As Jake Fyfe later related, whether the target saw them, or thought he saw them; heard them or thought he did; detected them on radar, or simply made a routine night dive, will never be accurately known. One thing Jake was definite on, however: he would get no chance to detect *Batfish* a second time!

Once again the American submarine goes through all the intricate details of night surface approach, detecting target course and speed, charting his zigzag plan, projecting his present course and deciding what must be his next move. But there is a difference: the skipper is not going to go on in on the surface. The Jap detected him the last time. He's got more strings to his bow than that!

The Jap has speeded up, and changed course slightly but not radically. *Batfish* again seeks a position up in front of him, and when the range and distance to the track are to Fyfe's liking, *Batfish* dives—but not entirely! Since the radar antennæ are normally on top of the higher fixed structures of the ship, it follows that they are the last things to go under when a submarine dives. All Fyfe had done was dive his ship so that these vital antennæ were still out of water, although nearly all the rest of the submarine was beneath the surface. This is a good trick, and takes a lot of practice on the part of your crew. That *Batfish* had been able to do it so neatly is a tribute to the state of training and competence of her crew. With her radar antennæ still dry and out of water, they still function as well as when she was fully surfaced, and the dope continues to feed into the fire-control gear, even though not a thing can be seen through the periscope.

And of course the Jap, probably alerted and nervous—maybe he has heard of the failure of one of his brother subs to get through this same area two nights ago—has no target to see or detect by radar, unless you consider a few little odd-shaped pieces of pipe and metal sticking up above the surface a target.

So on he comes, making twelve knots now, fairly confident that he has managed to avoid the sub which had stalked him a couple of hours ago. He doesn't even notice or pay any attention to the curious structure in the water a few hundred yards off his starboard beam—for Jake Fyfe has resolved to get as close as possible in order to make sure—and four deadly fish streak his way out of the dark night. . . .

Mercifully, most of the Nip crew probably never knew what had hit them. The first torpedo detonated amidships with a thunderous explosion, virtually blowing the ill-fated ship apart. As the two halves each upended and commenced to sink swiftly, amid horrible gurgles of water and foaming of released air and fuel oil, the second and third torpedoes also struck home! Their explosions were slightly muffled, however, as though they might have struck some stray piece of metal, and gone off mostly in water; but they served to increase the probability that none of the enemy crew had survived the initial attack.

Three minutes later Fyfe logged two more explosions from deep be-

neath his ship, evidently some kind of internal explosions in the broken hulk of the sinking submarine. Eight minutes later one terrifically loud explosion rocked *Batfish,* which was at first thought to be an aircraft bomb, though how could an aircraft have so suddenly arrived at the scene, especially at night? The explosion was finally put down to part of the swan song of the Nipponese sub. All during this period, according to the official report, and for some time later, sound heard "a variety of noises, identified as small internal explosions, escaping air, etc."

This time Jake Fyfe was prevented from trying to rescue any of the possible survivors of the holocaust by the presence of a plane, which was detected just as he was getting ready to surface and look for them. It is highly doubtful, however, that there could have been any, in view of the triple-barreled blow the submarine had received.

Shortly after midnight, some twenty-four hours later, one of the more irrepressible members of *Batfish's* crew was heard to mutter: "What, again? Ho-hum—here we lose another night's sleep playing tag with these slant-eyed submarines!"—as Captain Jake Fyfe rushed past him in the control-room *en route* to the conning tower.

"Captain to the conn!" For the third time in four days the radar operator has called his skipper—unfortunately the patrol reports of our submarines do not usually list the names of the crew, nor their stations, which is too bad. It would be interesting to know whether the same man spotted the enemy each time, or not. From the times of the three contacts, however, 2210, 1915, and 0155, it would appear that one contact was made by each of the three watch sections, and that therefore the three men standing the radar watches each can lay claim to one Nip sub.

Naturally, the particular peculiarity in the appearance of the radar scope which had first served to alert *Batfish* had been carefully explained to all radar watchers, and they all knew what to look for. In this case, as in the previous one, the operator simply pointed to his 'scope, and stated, flatly: "There's another one of them Jap subs, Captain!"

It is not recorded, nor is there cause to suspect that Jake Fyfe was particularly worried over his own or anyone else's loss of sleep at this particular juncture. One look at the screen, and he rapped out the command to sound the general alarm.

The penetrating musical notes of the general alarm, sounding for all the world like a continuously sounded (and loud) door chime—*"Bong, bong, bong, bong—"* must have been calculated to reach deep into your subconscious mind. No less arresting is the several-times-repeated command that follows immediately afterward: "All hands, man your battle stations! All hands, man your battle stations!"

Keyed up to the dangerous and precarious living which is the lot of all submariners on war patrol, it takes considerably less than a minute for every station in the ship, all three hundred eleven feet of her, to be manned.

This time Fyfe himself gets on the ship's interior announcing system. "It looks like another Nip submarine, boys!" he says. "We ought to be written right into their operation orders by this time! Let's see if we can't help him along the same road as the other two!"

Throughout the ship, the crew grins at the skipper's witicism. "Operation order, indeed! But we'll help them join their ancestors!" So runs their unspoken comment.

Fyfe and his tracking party are pretty fine hands by this time, and it takes a very short time before the Jap is picked up for sure on the radar, and his course and speed are known. Admittedly, the U. S. submariners are fairly certain he will either be on the northerly course of the first sub, or the southeasterly one of the second. It proves to be the latter—course one two zero, speed seven. *Batfish* heads to intercept, playing it cagily, as always, but a little more self-confident this time. Somehow these Japs don't seem to have as good equipment as our own—we can thank our home front for that; and they surely are not using what they have to the best advantage—for which we can thank *them,* and we will! (The thanks referred to are the business ends of torpedoes; sometimes war breeds strange mixtures of philosophy and cynicism.)

Batfish's patrol report records that, with the range still quite long, and before the American submarine had been able to get into attack position, the Japanese sub dived. Just why he did this Fyfe was then, and later, unable to explain. Possibly he detected an aircraft—or thought he did, for *Batfish* saw no planes on her radar at the time; or possibly he got a momentary contact on *Batfish* through some unexplained vagary of his radar equipment; the most probable explanation is that he had heard of the failure of two other boats to get through this particular stretch, and was attempting to make pursuit more difficult by diving occasionally.

But Jake Fyfe has the answer for this one, cold. Last night qualified him in its implementation. He heads, despite this new development, to the spot originally selected for attack position. Then, instead of diving, he proceeds down the track at four knots, sound gear rigged out, radar sweeping steadily and deliberately, lookouts alerted and tensely watching.

Half an hour after the Jap dived, *Batfish's* radar once again picks up the faint shimmering emanations of the Nip radar. He's back up again, though this time no blowing of tanks has been heard. Fyfe, Sprinkle, and the tracking party commence the same old approach game, once again.

The first thing to do is to get actual radar contact; this wabble in the 'scope is no good for tracking, even though it does give a vague indication of the enemy bearing. So *Batfish* heads for the source of what her radar operators now term the "wabbly," expecting to get contact momentarily. Several thousand yards are covered in this manner, with no result, except that the "wabbly" is getting stronger.

Fyfe and his exec become very worried over this development. They know the Jap is surfaced—or can he have thought of the same dodge they themselves used only last night? Suppose the Jap is even then in a process of making the same type of approach on *Batfish!*. An unpleasant thought to entertain! The lookouts redouble their vigilance, especially directing their search at the water surface within half a mile around them. At the skipper's order, everything else in the ship is subordinated to the sound watch. Fans and blowers are secured. Unnecessary or non-essential gear throughout the ship is turned off. Most important, the Diesel engines are secured, and propulsion shifted to the battery. Silently, eerily, *Batfish* glides through the water, peering and listening for the telltale swoosh of a torpedo coming at her. If the Jap is very smart indeed, he will himself silence also, and will get so close before shooting that *Batfish* will not have a chance of avoiding the torpedoes, even though she might actually hear them on the way!

The lapping of the water alongside is excruciatingly loud, in the unnatural stillness. The very air seems stifling and oppressive, on the bridge, as it most certainly is down below, with all blowers turned off! One's very breath seems to stop, and one's heart beats with a muffled thump, which nevertheless interferes with your hearing. The tiny blower motor in the radar gear whines insistently, in the conning tower; impossible to shut it down, because it keeps the radar tubes from overheating—Sprinkle makes a mental note to have it overhauled at the first opportunity.

Down below, everyone talks in whispers—not that whispering could do any good, but in tacit recognition of the deadly desperateness of the sit-

uation: The Jap sub, submerged, possibly making an approach—and *themselves still on the surface!*

But it has been recorded that Jake Fyfe, when he wants to be, can be a very stubborn gent! His brain isn't idle; he is still figuring the odds; but he knows that his only chance of getting the Jap sub is to remain on the surface and play for the fifty-fifty chance that he has not been detected after all! Even his iron nerve is affected by the unusual strain, but he is not going to be scared out of a good target by some as yet unconfirmed fears. Time enough to dive, he reasons, when "wabbly" shows characteristics different from those he has shown so far. There is no indication of anything untoward in the steady pulsations coming in up to now. Furthermore, he knows where the Jap ought to be, and the bearing of "wabbly" indicates he is still there.

The basic problem, of course, is to compute how far the Jap sub can travel toward them, assuming his most probable course and speed for the time since he dived, and then to stay at least that distance, plus a little to be on the safe side, away from the spot where he submerged. Fyfe, straining for that elusive radar contact which his reasoned deductions say should come soon, allows *Batfish* to go as far as he dares before reversing course away again. Just as he gives the order, someone in one of the engine-rooms drops a wrench on the steel deck. The sharp noise is carried up the silent main induction pipe and hits the tensely waiting and watching bridge with a shock. All hands are visibly startled, and one lookout almost drops his binoculars. The skipper half-opens his mouth, then shuts it again. It wouldn't do to show exasperation at this point.

And then, finally, with *Batfish* still swinging to her hard over rudder, it comes at last. "Radar contact, bearing three three six!" Fyfe's judgment and nerve have been vindicated again. The Jap was probably just being cagy himself, and had no knowledge of the presence of the United States submarine.

If he had any such knowledge, he would not have surfaced and run right into the trap so neatly laid for him. Once his location has been definitely established, and the fact that he is on the surface also established, *Batfish* can commence her own attack, in the meantime drawing a few deep breaths. Strangely, it is with positive relief that the attack, in this instance, is undertaken. At least, as long as *Batfish* has him on her radar, she knows what he's doing: that's a distinct improvement over the events of the past hour!

It happens that there are only two torpedoes left forward, in the American submarine. That really does not matter so much, any more, since she is due shortly to depart station *en route* to Pearl Harbor. It must be admitted that no one expected to run into three nearly identical situations like this—and up till the third submarine was detected, Fyfe had held no qualms whatever at being nearly "dry" forward. Now, however, there is a problem presented.

It is necessary so to maneuver the American sub that the Jap goes across her stern instead of her bow. Not too easy to do, since you have to be going away instead of toward the target. If you see that you are going to be a little outside the optimum firing range on the bow shot, often it is possible to close somewhat just prior to firing, merely by speeding up. But for a stern shot, you have to get too close to begin with, and figure your speed so that you'll have opened out just sufficiently as the target goes by. Add to that the normal difficulty always experienced in lining up anything backward. But let us not get the impression that a stern shot is to be avoided, or that American submariners are not quite expert in its use! The preferable situation is to have fish in both torpedo-rooms, and to be able to take what comes in the way of a shot, without the necessity of making sure either bow or stern is used.

So we cannot make out too great concern over Jake Fyfe's predicament—no more than he does. It's all in the game. He plays his target slowly and carefully, somewhat like an expert fisherman campaigning against a crafty "big fella." The cast has been made; the fly has landed; the "big fella" is nosing toward it, ready to head back for the deep water at the slightest suspicious sign—

This particular submarine has shown considerably more wariness than did either of the other two. His peculiar actions on surfacing have proved him to be astute and careful, and Jake Fyfe is not the man to underrate this opponent. His recent scare is rather fresh in mind, and the ice is still mighty thin, measured as it is only in the superiority of United States equipment and American alertness. There had been a time, not long ago, when American alertness had been at a low ebb—the date when that particular chicken came home to roost will long be remembered.

So *Batfish* tracks the target, gets his course and speed entirely by radar without ever having seen him, and finally submerges dead ahead of him, several miles away. Once again, Fyfe uses that stunt of leaving his radar antennæ out of water, so that the all-important information on the target's movements will continue to be available to his fire-control party and the intricate instruments they operate. Only this time he keeps his stern toward the target, and moves slowly away from him, turning as he does so, with the result that the doomed Jap passes directly across his stern at the desired range, and three torpedoes are on their way to meet him. This is a deliberate shot, if there ever is one.

It also is slightly longer in range than the two previous attacks, and there is a longer wait in *Batfish's* conning tower, after the fish are finally sent on their way. There are few things harder on the nerves than this waiting to see whether you have hit or missed. Somehow you are so keyed up that your sense of time is completely gone, and ten seconds will seem like a minute, a minute like seven.

The skipper is watching through the periscope. He can now clearly see the long low shape of the enemy, his odd-shaped bridge, and his peculiar undulating deckline. He is not a bad-looking ship, Fyfe must admit to himself, and most of these big Jap boats are pretty fast, at least as fast as our own. Not much is known about how they handle underwater, however, and like all U. S. submariners, Fyfe will reserve his judgment on that score. Our experience with big boats is that you pay for size with submerged maneuverability, and that the well-established theory that efficiency varies as the size of the vessel does not apply to submarines. But be that as it may, the Nip is a pretty good-looking submarine. He is painted black, which makes him just a little easier to see against the gray murk of the night, and on the side of his bridge can quite plainly be seen a white rectangle with a dark disk in the center.

On he comes, ominous and a bit pathetic, entirely unaware as he is of the three messengers of doom racing his way. Fyfe, in the meantime, becomes a bit anxious. Without taking his fascinated eyes from the periscope eyepiece, he suddenly calls out: "How long since the first one?"

Clark Sprinkle answers obliquely: "About fifteen seconds to go, Captain." Knowing the range and the torpedo speed, he has calculated, as all good executive officers should, the time from firing the first torpedo until torpedo junction should be established. Three stopwatches in *Batfish's* conning tower are running, ready to record the moments of the three torpedo explosions.

"Fifteen seconds! Damn!" with which fervent comment Jake Fyfe continues to peer through his periscope, waiting to see the success or failure of this, his latest and toughest attack.

But the torpedoes run true and as intended. Finally Fyfe's impatience is brought to an end. "A hit!" he shouts. "A beautiful hit!" And so

it is, one single torpedo hit which produces a brilliant orange explosion right in the center of the stricken ship! Simultaneously, a wide diffusion of pips is noted on the radar screen, indicating that the target has blown apart. Then all the pips subside, and finally there are no pips of any kind left. The whole catastrophe has been silent; no sound whatsoever has reached the eager listeners in the American submarine. A moment later, however, the noise of the explosion, with its terrifying aftermath, arrives, crackling over the sound gear, into the headsets of the operators, and indeed coming right through the pressure hull, so that no man in the crew need have it described to him.

The loud *"Wham"* of the torpedo warhead going off is heard, followed instantly, and almost as though it were one single explosion, by a much louder and more prolonged *"Whrroooom"!* This undoubtedly is the enemy's magazines going up—and there exists a strong probability that he is carrying an extra heavy load of the same, possibly intended for the beleaguered Japs in the Philippines.

One of the three stopwatches is stopped with the first hit, and there is no doubt that this was the first torpedo, running the calculated range at exactly the calculated speed. But there are no further hits, despite the care with which they had been launched on their way. However, this occasions no disappointment, since there is simply *nothing left for the last two fish to hit;* they run, straight and true, through the roiled water, through the bits of débris, through the streams of air bubbles and oil rising to the surface, and on beyond until they reach the limit of their run, and then they sink.

As for *Batfish,* Jake Fyfe had her on the surface within three minutes after the torpedo hit, heading for the area of destruction. Though he strongly doubted that there could possibly be any survivors of the terrific explosion he had witnessed, he was determined, as before, to give them a chance for their lives. It was nearly dawn, and no good came from use of the searchlight, which Fyfe had ordered turned on and played upon the water; so it was secured, and the decision was made to wait until daylight, in hopes that Jap planes patrolling the area would somehow not be immediately in evidence.

Parenthetically, one cannot help comparing *Batfish's* repeated magnanimous attempts to succor the victims of her attacks with the treatment meted out in similar circumstances by the Japanese. There is one instance on record in which most of the crew of an American submarine were picked up by a Japanese destroyer; one man was injured, and was promptly thrown overboard. Another had swallowed so much salt water that he was retching heavily, and would also have gone overboard, had he not fought clear of his saviors and joined the remainder of the group of survivors. In the case of *Tang,* the pitifully small number of survivors were mercilessly beaten and clubbed about the head and body.

By contrast, *Batfish* deliberately exposed herself by turning on a searchlight to assist in locating survivors of her night's handiwork, and then voluntarily remained on the surface in these enemy waters until long after daybreak, in hope of possibly finding one or two. Since her position was well within enemy aircraft patrols, the unofficial rules by which most United States submarines guided their actions required that she be submerged during daylight.

Several of our submarines were enabled to rescue enemy survivors in some manner or other, after either they or someone else had torpedoed them. In more than one instance American sailors or officers had to go overboard after them and force them to accept their hospitality. In no case was such a prisoner badly treated, after rescue; most of them gained weight during their sojourn on board, and were so well treated that instructions had finally to be issued to treat them with greater severity in order not to "spoil" them!

After dawn finally came, in the case of *Batfish,* much oil, bits of wood and paper, débris of various kinds, all newly in the water and quite evidently from the sunken submarine, were sighted. No bodies were seen, however; nor were there any live Japanese either, for that matter. It appeared that once again there was to be nothing tangible to reward Jake Fyfe for his brilliant achievement; but finally a small wooden box was recovered from the water. Upon inspection, the box was found to contain the Jap navigator's work-book and navigational instruments. Evidently he had just brought it topside, perhaps preparatory to taking a sight or two despite the not very favorable weather, but had not as yet opened it. He himself did not survive the destruction of his ship, but the unopened box floated to the surface, battered but still sound.

Since the Japanese language is not suited for recording of figures, it has always been the custom for Arabic numerals to be used for navigational purposes, as well as others. So there was no difficulty in reading the work-book. Apparently the Jap departed Nagoya for Formosa, and had left the latter place for Luzon, where he never arrived.

Nothing further of note occurred during this patrol, and *Batfish* left her area for Guam three days later, in accordance with the provisions of her operation order. On February 21st she moored alongside the submarine tender *Apollo* in Apra harbor, Guam.

To say that Jake Fyfe was received with open arms by the submarine brethren is putting it mildly indeed. Though no public announcement of his magnificent feat could be made, owing to the well-laid policy of cloaking our submarine activities in anonymity, it instantly became known and broadcast throughout the submarine force. Here was another patrol nearly on a par with Sam Dealey's famous one, in which he got five destroyers! Here was additional proof that the spirit of the submarine force, so well exemplified by Dealey and O'Kane and Morton, was still going strong, and that those who came after had not lost the touch of their predecessors.

But there is an even more important and far-reaching effect. To a nation like the United States, with its far-flung merchant marine, the submarine is perhaps the greatest menace to successful prosecution of war. That is to say, if and when we get into another war, our backs will immediately be up against the wall if the powers arrayed against us have a powerful submarine force. Witness what the Germans did to Great Britain in two World Wars, and to us in the Second World War! In both instances the Allies won, but only by the narrowest of margins.

However, born of the imminence of defeat, a new type of submarine was developed in the closing days of World War II by the Germans. True, they did not invent anything extraordinary, but they put several known though unused ideas together to develop the high-speed snorkel submarine, and it may safely be said that this vessel has revolutionized previous concepts of anti-submarine warfare. It is virtually immune to the countermeasures we used so successfully against German and Japanese submersibles, and its efficiency in attack is trebled.

One of the truisms of the military profession is that the minute you think you have a problem settled into its proper niche, the pro and counter measures and arguments all neatly evaluated, something happens to throw everything out of balance again. That is what happened to the French with their Maginot Line, with tragic consequences with which we are all familiar. That happened when Admiral Sir Percy Scott (R.N.) and Commander William S. Sims (U.S.N.) first proposed the all-big-gun center-line fast battleship which Great Britain promptly built—thus reducing her lead over German sea-power from about thirty pre-dreadnaughts to *only*

one dreadnaught—and making possible the First World War. It may happen to us with our atomic bomb; for after all, no one has a monopoly on wisdom, and the same incentive which produced the brilliant but unscrupulous attack on Pearl Harbor might find a way to get around the bomb also.

Fortunately, our military leaders have not neglected the challenge laid down by the fast submarine. A tremendous amount of thought has gone, and has been going, into the problem of how to get enemy subs before they can wreak their threatened damage upon our commerce—our lifeblood, so to speak. And every time the discussion in the halls of the Navy Department or the Pentagon—or even in the White House—has waxed long and earnest, someone is sure to come up with a reference to Jake Fyfe and the fact that *Batfish* sank three enemy submarines within the space of four days with no damage and very little danger to herself. *Why not set a submarine to kill a submarine?* The idea has grown until now, four years after Fyfe's exploit, something is being done about it. It is very obvious that the submarine will enjoy, in relation to another submersible, those same advantages which all subs always have had. That is, surprise, the ability of concealment, and so on. With one difference: since the hunt is to take place in the natural environment of the submarine, *either may become the hunter, and either the hunted.*

Prior detection will assume much greater importance than ever before—if that is possible. There is no question but that it will be a nerve-wracking occupation—but neither is there any question but that among the intrepid young men of the United States Submarine Force there will be found many who are ready and eager for the assignment. It will simply be up to the people of the country to supply them with the tools they will need to do the job—just as we always have in the past.

Batfish is now out of commission in reserve, lying inactivated at Mare Island, California, in company with many of her sisters. There is little to distinguish her from the other gray wolves of the sea moored there, except the replica of a Presidential Unit Citation bar, painted inconspicuously on the side of her bridge, and the silhouettes of three Japanese I-class submarines, likewise painted below it.

As for Jake Fyfe himself, he is now on duty as Officer in Charge, Submarine Department, U. S. Submarine School, New London, Connecticut—a most appropriate employment, one might say, since his duties to a large degree consist of indoctrinating young officers and enlisted men with the traditions of the Force, its history, its objects and the lore of undersea warfare.

You Take

THE afternoon sun of a beautiful June day poured benevolently down upon the Berkshire Hills. A mild breeze stirred the windsock above the hangar, rippled the short grass of the flying field and tugged at the butch haircut of Andrew Blaine.

Sole owner, manager and flight instructor of the Berkshire Gliding Center, Andrew was explaining the mysteries of thermal currents to an interested group when he was handed a letter which a thoughtful student had picked up at the village postoffice. Noting the Boston postmark, he hastily ended the lecture, dismissed the class and tore open the envelope with eager fingers.

In emphatic language, the letter said no. " '. . . Do not intend to dispose of the property at this time,' " he read aloud, " 'and further advise you that any attempt to remove or destroy the trees thereon will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.' "

Andrew, a tall, thin young man dressed in old Army sun-tan trousers and a soiled T-shirt, uttered a low moan. He felt as if he had bailed out without a parachute. Slowly he rose to his feet, listening to the thunderous collapse of his hopes, his dreams, his bank account. For some minutes he glared balefully at a row of innocent-looking trees bordering the far side of the field, then walked with listless steps to the front of the hangar.

Harley Addams was industriously applying a coat of oil varnish to the fuselage of the *Georgina II.* An ancient and expert cabinet-maker, Harley had white hair and mustaches, shrewd blue eyes, and a skin the texture of mellowed old leather. He read the document with interest.

The sprightly tale of a young man who started a glider school but found his take-offs cramped by a neighbor's trees; and of the young lady who took a deep interest in the situation.

by

DONOVAN FITZPATRICK

"Looks like he means what he says," Harley observed, shifting his tobacco to the opposite cheek. "Then again, you can't always tell."

"He means it, all right," Andrew said hollowly. "This is the end."

The old cabinet-maker squinted across the field at the trees in question. "Well, now, I can't see for the life of me why he wouldn't be glad to sell that land. Nothing but rocks and a half-dozen elms; not much good to anybody, seems to me."

"Those elms are good enough to mess up my glider field," Andrew said. "If I can't get rid of them, I'm sunk."

"Kinda looks like it," Harley agreed. "On the other hand, something may turn up." He resumed his varnishing. "Got this machine pretty near done, anyway."

ANDREW felt a slight lift of spirits as he surveyed the sailplane. Built by Harley from Andrew's design, it was a thing of grace and beauty. Even on the ground it seemed to be in flight. A lean, racy two-place job, the *Georgina II* had spars of the finest silver spruce, stressed-plywood skin and a retractable landing-wheel. Running his fingers along the smooth surface of the tapered wing, Andrew was reminded of the girl it was named after—Georgina Keating. He sighed. His true love was a hundred miles away, in Boston. It had been nearly two months since he'd quit his job and come to the Berkshires to open the glider school, and in that time he had seen Georgina only once. He wished he could see her now.

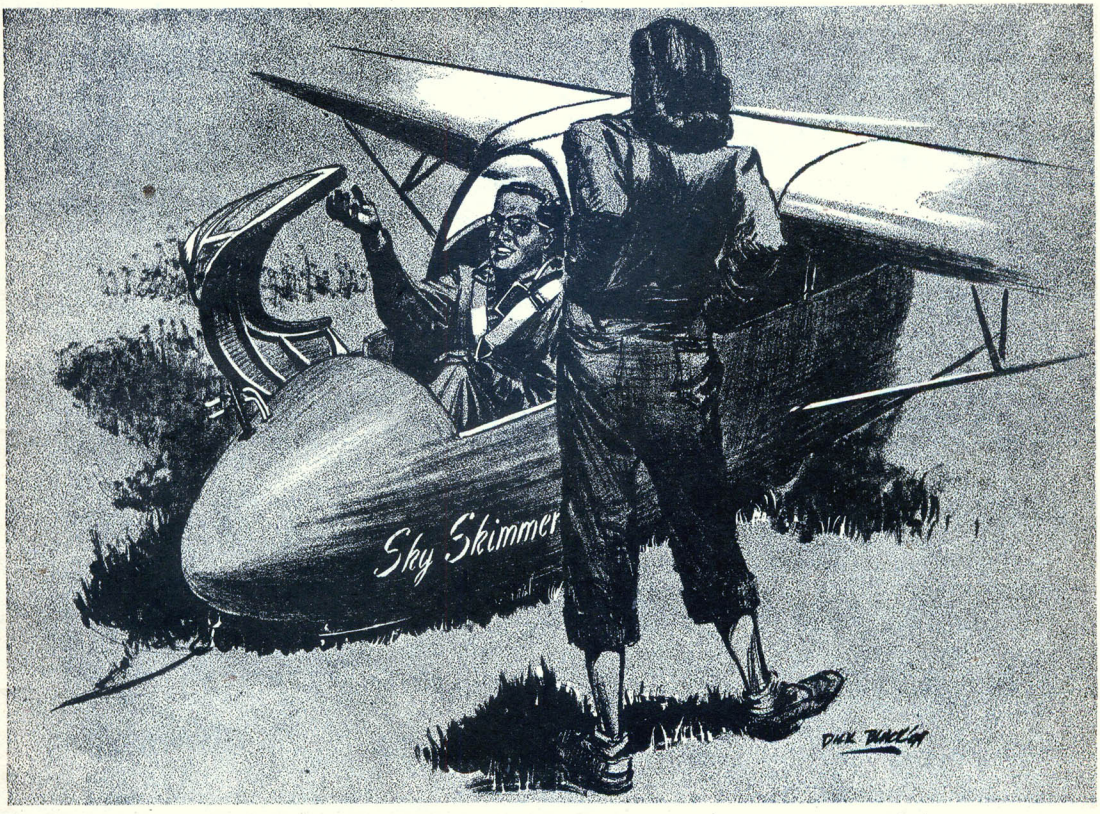
About an hour later, he did. Georgina wheeled up in a convertible, threw herself out of the car and into Andrew's arms, and kissed him fervently. Andrew vibrated. He felt as if he were in a power dive.

"Andrew honey, it seems like ten years," Georgina cried. She kissed him again, then stepped back and gazed at him adoringly. "You look thin. Who's doing your cooking?"

"Me. You look wonderful," Andrew said happily. She was a gorgeous slim creature with sand-blonde hair, dark eyes and a creamy complexion. In high heels and a severely tailored dark blue suit with a fluff of white lace at her throat, she looked like the movie's idea of the beautiful

the High Road

Illustrated by Dick Black



"I was going up," Andrew said, "but since you've never shown any passionate enthusiasm for flying, I'll—"

career girl. Georgina occupied a position of considerable importance in the Public Relations Department of Nor'east Aircraft, Inc., the company from which Andrew had recently departed.

She greeted Harley and exclaimed over the *Georgina II*. At her last visit the sailplane had been merely a skeleton framework. Andrew then conducted her on a tour of the field, showing her the recently purchased training glider and the new launching winch, and bringing her up to date on the student enrollment.

A little later they walked down the field and sat on the grass at the edge of the slope. Five hundred feet below, the valley was a patchwork of muted browns and greens that shaded gradually into the darker hues of the distant Taconic Range. Georgina took off her shoes and stockings, and dug her shapely toes in the turf.

"Boy, this is the life—green grass, peace and quiet, the cows lowing in the pasture—"

"You're out of character," Andrew told her. "I see you as strictly the urban type, with a night-club pallor and plenty of carbon monoxide in your lungs. Incidentally, this being Tuesday, why aren't you slaving away for Nor'east Aircraft?"

"I just took the day off; I couldn't stand not seeing you any longer, Andrew honey. Besides, I've come to a decision, and I think you should be the first to know."

Andrew looked interested. "Go ahead."

"Before I begin," Georgina said, "kiss me."

He did. It had a powerful effect on him; he seemed to hear a long, low whistle that came from somewhere in the heavens. He looked up to see one of his students, grinning widely, floating past in the training glider.

"That's the only trouble with gliders," Andrew observed, blushing. "They don't make enough noise."

"It *is* a bit public here," Georgina said. "But never mind. Andrew

honey, I wish to speak seriously. I love you dearly, as you know. I'm sure you feel the same about me."

"Roger."

"Good. Andrew, you've got to marry me."

"Georgina!"

"I mean, I can't stand being away from you any longer," she said earnestly. "I'm losing weight; I can't sleep; I don't even get a bang out of my work any more. I'm unhappy. I want to marry you and get back the roses in my cheeks. I realize I may appear a bit forward, but that's the way it is."

ANDREW pondered at some length. "Georgina," he said finally, "I love you madly, and I'd marry you tomorrow—if I were solvent. I hate to admit it, but you're looking at a man tottering on the brink of economic disaster. The Berkshire Gliding Center, in short, may fold up."

"Come, come, Blaine, you just told me that you had over thirty students. Don't they pay their bills?"

"It's not that," Andrew said sorrowfully. "It's trees." He pointed out to her the line of elms across the field, explaining that the landing-area, being long and narrow, was quite adequate when the wind blew from the west. "Which it does, usually. But when it blows from the south, take-offs and landings have to be made over those trees. And that's much too dangerous to let the students attempt."

"With a south wind, nobody flies. So, no income. Is that the deal?"

Andrew nodded.

Georgina chewed on a blade of grass. "Okay, why not cut down the trees? Get an axe."

"Those trees," he explained, "are on ten acres of land belonging to a Mr. Garret B. Simms. He won't sell, and he says if I so much as lay a finger on his elms, he'll be out here with six cops and a lawyer." He stretched out on the grass and closed his eyes. "I'm ruined."

"Hmmm," Georgina murmured. "There must be some way. . . . Did you say Garret B. Simms? Boston?"

At Andrew's nod, she went on. "Why, I know him—or about him. I was having dinner with Vincent Paxton last week—Vincent is on Nor'east's legal staff, you know—"

"No, I didn't," Andrew interrupted, sitting up again.

"—and he was telling me about a Garret B. Simms who's trying to sell Nor'east a big tract of land. Vincent said this Simms made a fortune in real-estate; a very shrewd operator."

"For my money, he's a jerk," Andrew said stiffly. "What about this Vincent guy?"

Georgina wriggled her toes. "I'm sort of glad you're jealous, Andrew honey, but he's just a legal beaver who's taken me out to dinner a couple of times. But we're getting away from the subject. I put in a bid for your hand in matrimony."

Andrew wet a finger and tested the wind. It seemed to be shifting to the south. "Georgina, you're being impractical. I'm losing my shirt with this glider field, and you want to marry me. It's crazy."

"I've never been so practical in my life," she maintained stoutly. "Look—to bring the record up to date: We've known each other almost two years. We love each other. We planned to get married. If you'd kept your job as chief designer for Nor'east, we'd probably be walking down the aisle this month. Am I right?"

"Roger," Andrew said.

"Roger. But you quit to start this gliding school. Did I object? No. A worthy ambition, in the best American tradition. But where does it leave me?"

"In Boston," Andrew said miserably.

"You need me, Andrew honey. My place is at your side. Shoulder to shoulder, we'll fight this thing out. I don't care if we're poor—I'll plant a garden, carry water from the well, chop the wood. I'll cook for you—"

"You never boiled an egg in your life," he reminded her.

"I'll learn. I'll also mend your socks, put up curtains, make a home for you. How can you resist such an offer?"

"You don't know what you're saying. It's very difficult to adapt to country life after living in a big city. I don't think you'd like it."

"Don't be silly. You adapted."

"I was born on a farm. That makes it easy for me, naturally."

"You told me your family moved to Boston when you were two years old. If that makes you a country boy, I'm Henry Thoreau."

"I CAN'T let you take the risk," Andrew insisted. "You have a fine career in Public Relations. With me, you may end up in a pauper's grave."

"The only relations I want are with you," Georgina said, kissing him. Andrew vibrated. He felt as if he were flying a jet job.

"Believe me, Georgina," he said, after his blood stopped pounding, "I'm only thinking of you."

"I'm only thinking of me, too. And don't worry about my quitting Nor'east. I got an offer of a job from Carter, Donner and Bliss. That's a big Public Relations firm in Chicago."

"I've heard of them," Andrew said, impressed. "You must be pretty good."

"Well, it's either marry you or sign on with C, D and B," Georgina said with finality. "I can't stay in Boston. It's a nice town, but you're not in it."

"I can't ask you to share my shaky future," Andrew said. He rose and helped her to her feet, and they walked down the field. "With Carter, Donner and Bliss, you'll be sure of three meals a day, at least."

"You're condemning me to a sad end, Andrew," Georgina said. "If I go to Chicago, we'll probably never see each other again. Doesn't that mean anything to you?"

"I can't bear to think of it. Look—don't be too hasty. If things work out, maybe I can ask you to marry me in a year."

"A year?" Georgina eyed him speculatively. "I don't intend to wait that long."

THE next ten days were busy ones for Andrew, but the evenings were long, and he spent them worrying about Georgina. The thought that she might take the job in Chicago invariably produced a sinking feeling in his stomach. He had a powerful urge to collect a ring, preacher and Georgina and put an end to one of his worries. But with this desire came the practical question of what he would do with a wife and no airport. Often he would stand for minutes at a time and stare fixedly at the elms. They seemed to grow taller every day.

Harley, with his unique ability to see both sides of every question, was no help to Andrew. "Don't think you'd be smart to marry the girl right now," Harley told him. "On the other hand, if you love her—" Harley shifted his tobacco reflectively. "Now, I never took a wife myself, and probably a good thing, too—"

Andrew waited.

"Still, if I had it to do over again, guess I would."

"Oh, fine," Andrew snorted. "Nothing like coming to a clear-cut decision."

The *Georgina II*, under several coats of varnish expertly applied by Harley, began to take on a beautiful luster. It was as smooth to the touch as velvet, and Andrew could scarcely wait until it was finished. He hoped it would fly as well as it looked.

He acquired three new students, and for a time found himself relatively content. But the first week in July brought a change in the wind. For three days it blew steadily from the south, and all instruction stopped. Also, all income. Andrew tried a take-off and landing over the trees and almost cracked up. Reluctantly he was forced to admit that unless he could get rid of the elms, the Berkshire Gliding Center, Andrew Blaine, Prop., would never be a great success.

"Kiss me," she said. It had a powerful effect on him. He seemed to hear a long, low whistle.

In desperation, he decided to call on the owner of the trees in person. Examining his assets, he found that by closing out his emergency fund and selling several non-essential personal items, such as his car, watch, and record collection, he could pay approximately twice what the property was worth. At double the normal profit, he told himself hopefully, Mr. Simms would certainly sell.

After a morning spent in raising the money, he left for Boston by bus. He arrived in the city shortly before five and taxied to Simms' office, just off Boston Common. The real-estate tycoon, a chubby individual with a red face and no hair, was preparing to close up shop for the day.

Andrew introduced himself. "Oh, yes," Simms said. He looked at Andrew with considerable interest. "I can't sell you that property, son."

Wasting no words, Andrew laid a check on the desk. Simms glanced at the figure. His eyes widened. "That's a lot more than the property's worth, my boy."

"I know it," Andrew agreed. "But I'm desperate. I need that land; my future depends on it."

"What I meant," Simms went on genially, "is that I sold that piece of property last week."

Andrew jumped. "Sold it? To who—I mean, to whom?"

"Can't tell you that," Simms said gruffly. "My client asked me not to reveal—uh—the name."

Andrew stumbled out of the office, his head in a whirl. He seemed to be in a flat spin and blacking out. Several minutes later, coming out of his daze, he found that some unconscious compass had brought him to the street where Georgina lived. Feeling the need of a sympathetic ear, he entered the building, climbed the stairs and pushed the bell of her apartment.

He heard a muffled "Come in." He opened the door and walked down the hall to the living-room.

"Georgina—" Andrew began, and stopped. A girl was lying on the floor, her legs in the air, and it wasn't Georgina. This girl had long black hair and wore an embarrassingly small amount of clothing, consisting of two scanty pieces of some silky material. Andrew stared, gulped.

"Well, hello," she said, lowering her legs to the floor. "I wasn't expecting you."

"No," Andrew said. "Certainly not. I mean—excuse me—I thought this was Apartment Twenty-three."

"It is," the girl said agreeably. She rose gracefully to her feet and moved toward Andrew. "What can I do for you, friend?"

"Why, I'm looking for Miss Georgina Keating," he mumbled, trying not to stare at her costume. "She lives here. Or did. I guess I'm mixed up."

"I wouldn't know," the girl said. "I moved in a week ago." She sidled up to Andrew. "Don't mind my costume; I'm just limbering up. I'm a dancer—I head the show at the Silver Slipper. By the way, my name is Indigo Royce."

"How do you do, Miss Royce," Andrew said. "I'm sorry I busted in like this. I didn't know that Georgina—"

"Your girl run out on you, baby?"

"No—that is—I—" Andrew felt a movement about his ankle. He looked down. "Help!" he shouted, throwing his arms around Indigo. A

long, thick snake was coiled around his leg.

Indigo bent down and disengaged the reptile. "Don't be frightened; it's only Coco. He's harmless, usually. I use him in my act." She draped the creature around her bare shoulders. Coco lifted his head and regarded Andrew with beady, unblinking eyes.

Andrew shuddered and retreated behind a chair. "I don't think he likes me. Doesn't he bite?"

"Oh, no," Indigo said. "Coco is a constrictor. Once in a while he squeezes me a little, but he doesn't bite. He swallows everything whole."

"Very interesting," Andrew said, moving toward the hall. "Well, thanks, Miss Royce—"

"Oh, leaving? Wouldn't you like a drink, Mr.—I don't think I caught the name."

"Frank Buck," Andrew said, opening the door. "Good-by."

The next morning Andrew awoke in the best of spirits. He stretched luxuriously between the sheets and looked with approval upon the sunlight streaming in his bedroom window. Thirty seconds later his memory clicked, and he remembered with terrible clarity the events of the preceding day. He immediately burrowed into his pillow and tried to go to sleep for the next ten years. This proved futile, and with heavy heart he arose and dressed, resigned to life without Georgina and with the trees.

HARLEY, upon hearing the news, advised him to keep a stiff upper lip and hope for the best. Pondering this bit of wisdom, Andrew decided that the best would still be pretty bad. Outside of a bolt of lightning that would eliminate all six elms at one blow—highly improbable—he could see no very bright future for the gliding center. And even with the help of the elements, Andrew reflected, he faced a dismal future without Georgina. He could scarcely believe she would take off for Chicago without so much as a formal note of parting, and for several days he looked hopefully for a letter. None came. He waited a month, then sadly changed the name of the sailplane to *Sky Skimmer*.

The glider was Andrew's one consolation in a dreary world. Given its final coat of varnish, polished and rubbed, it was ready for testing. Andrew flew it every day for a week, and was slightly amazed that he had designed so fine a plane. He found it to have remarkable stability, a low sink rate, a high glide ratio and other gratifying characteristics, and decided to enter the annual September gliding contest at Elmira.

Standing in the door of the hangar one morning, he watched a cold front move down from the north, a dark gray line on the horizon that heralded the approach of rugged flying weather. By noon the dark line had developed into a foreboding mass, which Andrew correctly identified as cumulo-nimbus clouds. Having recently installed blind-flight instruments in the sailplane, he decided that conditions were favorable for the first real rough-weather test of the *Sky Skimmer;* accordingly, after lunch, he made the necessary preparations.

He invited one of the students to occupy the rear seat, as ballast, and made ready for take-off. He sat in the glider, waiting for the winch operator at the other end of the field to tighten the cable that would yank him into the air. Dimly, through the plexiglas canopy, he heard a shout.

Andrew saw a girl running toward him across the field. When she got closer, he recognized her as Georgina. But a different Georgina. She was dressed in beat-up corduroy slacks, turtle-neck sweater and a well-worn leather flight jacket. Andrew gasped. He had never seen her in anything but her Sunday best; yet somehow, in spite of the rather disreputable outfit, she still managed to look delicious.

"Andrew honey," Georgina cried, kissing him soundly, "it's me."

"What are you doing here?" Andrew asked. "And what's happened to you?" She looked tanned and healthy as a milkmaid.

"I have things to tell you," Georgina beamed. "Are you going up?"

"Well, I was, but since you've never shown any passionate enthusiasm for flying, I'll—"

"That's all in the past," she interrupted. "I want to go flying with you. I can be ballast as well as Henry here."

"My name's Albert," the student in the rear seat said haughtily.

"All right, Albert, hop out." Albert, looking offended, hopped out, and Georgina climbed in briskly.

ANDREW looked at the approaching clouds, now about six miles away. He feared the ride might be a little rough for Georgina, but he was so glad to see her that he didn't protest. "Keep your hands off the stick," he warned her. "And your feet off the rudder pedals, also."

"Okay, boss," Georgina said.

He signaled the winch operator and closed the canopy. The cable tightened and the sailplane began to move along the ground; after a short run it took the air under its wings and rose swiftly. At four hundred feet Andrew pulled the release ring and the cable dropped away; he banked to the right and began beating up and down the ridge, gaining altitude slowly.

"Why didn't you write?" he asked.

"Didn't have time," she answered from the rear cockpit. "And what do you mean by changing the name to *Sky Skimmer*? No faith, Andrew!"

"I had faith for a whole month. You could have sent a postcard."

"It flies well," Georgina remarked, after a few minutes of silence.

"That it does. How are things at Carter, Donner and Bliss?"

"Oh, about as usual," she said. "How's with you?"

"Terrible," Andrew admitted. Off to the northwest he saw a lone cumulus cloud, newly formed, and when he got fifteen hundred feet of altitude under him, he headed for it, meanwhile telling Georgina the details of his visit with Garret B. Simms. He omitted his meeting with the snake-charmer.

"I SUPPOSE real-estate men have to respect confidences, like doctors and psychoanalysts," Georgina philosophized.

"Ha!" was Andrew's comment to that. He arrived beneath the cloud, where he found, as he had anticipated, an updraft that lifted the glider to thirty-five hundred feet. At that height he turned north and headed for the big stuff. The line of storm-clouds was growing in size and blackness. Andrew decided to make for the cumuli just ahead of the main body, feeling that they would provide a sufficiently exciting ride for his passenger, and chose a cloud that towered several thousand feet into the sky. Its sides reflected the sun in a dirty yellow hue, and its bottom contained an especially dark patch that promised strong currents.

"So," he concluded, "the trees are flourishing, Simms sold the land, and I don't even know who owns it. Now you see why I was smart not to marry you."

They entered an area of shadow beneath the cloud. As Andrew expected, the glider began to climb rapidly, at eight feet per second. The air was smooth, but taut, like a violin string.

"I've got a surprise for you, Andrew honey," Georgina said. She reached over his shoulder and handed him a paper.

Holding the stick between his knees for a moment, he unfolded and read the document. After interpreting the legal language, Andrew was amazed to discover that the ten acres of land were the property of Georgina Keating, party of the second part, and duly filed in the county recorder's office.

"Well, I'll be darned!" he said, stunned. "I don't know what to say."

"Say you'll marry me," Georgina prompted. "You'd be crazy not to."

For a couple of minutes Andrew concentrated on his flying, holding

the sailplane in a tight circle as they rose into the bottom of the cumulus. It was not flat, but hollowed out—a great inverted bowl, dark purple in color. As they ascended into the funnel, great ridges and valleys formed around them; far above, the walls of the cañon came together at the top. The plane shuddered now and then as the air lost its smoothness and became turbulent.

"Gee, Georgina, you put me in a tough spot," Andrew told her. "People will say I married you for your acreage."

"I've got other assets, honey," she said, raising her voice against the rising organ-tone of the wind. "Anyway, don't worry about that now. You had better attend to your flying."

They climbed swiftly into the cathedral-like vaults of the clouds. The earth faded from sight, and the gloom deepened. Andrew had to go on instruments. The *Sky Skimmer* was slammed by heavy gusts that caused the wings to flex perceptibly. With every shudder, the canopy rattled loosely. Andrew was annoyed, realizing that he would have to realign and tighten the canopy before he made another flight.

The turbulence increased. They were well into the center of the cloud now, and the darkness was so intense that Andrew had difficulty in reading the instruments. It took all his strength to hold the glider in a steady turn that would keep them inside the cloud. Gradually the whistle of the wind over the wings lost its low, sustained note and became a high-pitched shriek. The air-speed indicated sixty miles an hour; the rate-of-climb was jammed against its stop at twenty-five feet per second.

It was getting cold; the temperature gauge read thirty degrees. The plane bucked and pitched violently; the canopy rattled and banged; the wind screamed.

"Boy, it's really rough," Georgina yelled in his ear.

"Getting sick? Scared?"

"Don't be silly. Of course not."

At twelve thousand feet the air-speed indicator froze. Andrew's arm and hand were cramped from holding the stick against the pressure.

"We'd better get out of here," he shouted. He brought the glider out of the turn and shoved the nose down. A sudden, terrific gust of wind flipped the *Sky Skimmer* almost on its back. The wings bent like saplings as Andrew hauled the stick far over. The plane recovered abruptly, and Andrew didn't duck fast enough when the canopy tore loose; its metal edge caught him just above the eyebrows before it swooshed off into space.

As he sank into unconsciousness, struggling against the bright pinwheels that turned to roaring blackness before his eyes, he was vaguely aware that the glider was in a spin. His last thought, which afforded him scant comfort, was that he and Georgina would perish together.

"Your girl run out on you, baby?" *"No—that is— Help!" he shouted.*

THE new life didn't seem too bad. There was a sweet smell, something like a combination of expensive perfume and fresh-cut hay. His head seemed to be resting on some delightfully soft substance.

He half-opened his eyes, wincing at the pain. In front of him hovered the face of an angel, upside down but beautiful. Cool hands patted his forehead.

Not half bad, Andrew thought. He opened his eyes wider, blinked. The angel's face assumed familiar features—Georgina. He was lying with his head in her lap.

"Welcome back, Andrew honey," she said.

Andrew lifted his head. The *Sky Skimmer*, still glistening with dew, stood ten feet away. It seemed to be intact. "Where am I?" he said weakly.

"About five miles from the field, I think," Georgina answered. "I thought I'd better get down as fast as possible. You've got a knob on your head that's a beauty."

"You flew the glider? In that storm?" Andrew felt as if he were in an outside loop. "Georgina, you've been holding out on me. Why, you saved our lives."

"Nothing, really," she said modestly. "Until yesterday, I was a duly enrolled student in the glider school at Elmira. I got my wings, as we pilots say. That's why I didn't write. When you get a glider pilot's license in less than six weeks, you don't have much time for correspondence. Besides, I wanted to surprise you. So here I am. You can scarcely refuse to marry me now."

Andrew's brain reeled. "Pardon me for a couple of minutes," he murmured dreamily. "I'm a little confused."

He laid his head in Georgina's lap again and closed his eyes.

"Sure, honey, take your time," she said softly. "We won't get married till tomorrow."

STRONGHOLD

THE foulest of all those traitors who would thwart our Emperor Otto in his efforts to hold together the newly established Holy Roman Empire was Ruprecht, Count of Thuringia, better known as Ruprecht the Brawler. And since the Brawler had hired Saxon mercenaries, who were pagans and highly superstitious, all of us within the walls of the Castle Ritterburg knew that the siege would begin the morning following the new moon. That would be the Calends of September, in the year of our Lord 965.

Around eighteen o'clock, on the eve of that fatal new moon, I, Bruno, the Count of Ritterburg, only son of the late Berthhold, stood on our castle's wall walk. I was staring gloomily across hilly country, blanketed with pines. Below me a serf, driving an ox-cart, was moving the last of his belongings to the safety of the deep woods. That poor devil, whose chances of living many days longer were as slim as my own, represented the last vestige of life down there. The serfs'-stockaded village was already abandoned.

In the distance I caught glimpses of the Rhine, shimmering beneath the setting sun. I shook my head sadly, thinking of pleasanter days—hunting and hawking. High up on the hills the whitewashed tower of the Ritterburg Monastery cropped out of the pines, like a dagger thrust suddenly through a rich tapestry. Beyond were our vineyards. It is odd, isn't it, how one's mind can revert to the trivia in moments of distress? It occurred to me that now, unmolested by our hounds, the foxes could gnaw to their hearts' content at our grapes. The thought angered me.

Herr Martin, Captain of the Arbalists, approached, went to a half-knee. He regarded me anxiously. Herr Martin had served under my father. His loyalty to our house was intense; there was no braver man in Christendom. Yet who could condemn him if he entertained doubts as to my abilities? I was twenty-four, recently graduated from the Military Institute of Paris.

"My lord," he said in a tired voice, "you sent for me?"

"Is there any late news?" I asked.

"Our scouts have returned," said Herr Martin. "The enemy's whereabouts is not certain. They are on the march, though, for the woods are thick with game being driven north by their approach."

The pent-up tenseness within me asserted itself. I could feel my hands trembling. I turned, taking in our donjon tower, the inner and outer courtyards, with a single glance. It was a depressing, lifeless sight. Everything humanly possible to do, we had done. The barbican walls were enforced; trebuchets and catapults were set up; there was ample supply of stones, Greek fire, and foodstuffs. Trained fighting men, however, were lacking—arbalists especially; our pleas for aid to fellow-lords were unheeded. We were hopelessly outnumbered.

My decision, though, from the beginning had been to fight to the last ditch. "At midnight," I said, "order the moat flooded."

"Yes, my lord."

"Inspect all wooden hoardings. Make certain the beams of the trebuchets are in perfect order."

"Yes, my lord."

"There are, of course, still no favorable replies from our pigeons?"

"No, my lord," said Herr Martin, staring somberly at his slippers. "None at all."

We began discussing how long we dared defend the outer courtyard. The conversation, however, was interrupted by the blare of a trumpet. From the watchtower, above the drawbridge, Tycho the Armorer shouted: "Friends approach! Aid has come!"

Immediately serfs began scurrying across the yard. Soldiers—sling-bearers, double-handed-axe-bearers, and a light corps of archers—took their stations along the wall walk, prepared for a possible ruse. There followed a clank of chains and the creak of heavy wooden beams. Up went the portcullis; down came the draw.

WITH Herr Martin at my heels, I reached the watchtower as those on the ground below were falling into a line of march. In the van were some two score monks, armor under their cowls, shields on their backs, lances in their right hands. High in the air rippled their flag—a red cross in a white field. Bringing up the rear were as many arbalists, well-equipped with long-sleeved leather hauberks and conical-shaped helmets. Now their standard was being raised.

"*Grosser Gott!*" exclaimed Herr Martin. "Castle Steinbach men!"

"It can't be," I said, utterly startled. "We sent them no plea."

"It makes no difference," said Herr Martin. "It is they. Don't you recognize the coat-of-arms—yes, there it is, quite plain to see: a wolf's head on a background of green?"

"Impossible—" I began; then I saw what was causing the gap between the van and the rear—a richly caparisoned stallion, followed by four docile asses on whose backs were wooden trunks, such as would carry a woman's clothes. Astride the stallion was Katherine von Steinbach.

"Why, that's Kathie!" I faltered.

An expression of alarm swept over Herr Martin's flat face. "Her presence," he said slowly, "can bode us no good."

"I don't understand it," I said. "Yet, it is certainly she."

"Send her away, my lord," Herr Martin pleaded earnestly. "Send her away immediately. Hasn't she humiliated you and our house enough already?"

"I am well aware of all that, Herr Martin," I told him sharply.

"It's a trick, my lord," Herr Martin warned. "The Brawler has also threatened her castle. An agreement has been reached. I beseech you. Take care."

"Have no fears on that score," I told him firmly. "I fully intend to."

THE private audience took place in our throne-room. There had been time for me to change to my best linen suit. What does one think when he is confronted with the lady who has scorned his hand and thus brought humiliation upon his house? I do not know. I sat in a stone chair, whose arms were carved lions' heads; I strove to give a regal appearance; my manner of receiving her was most formal. "I am pleased to welcome my good friend and ally, Katherine Countess of Steinbach," I greeted in faultless Latin.

Kathie bowed low. She wore a purple cape-cloak bordered with ermine. I saw only her blue eyes, flashes of pearly teeth, and her rosy cheeks. Her reply, also, was made in faultless Latin.

"Please be seated," I said. As a recognition of the equality of her rank, I indicated my late mother's chair, to my left.

Instead she sat upon the base of the throne, directly at my feet. With a flick of her hand, she threw back her hood. Her golden hair glistened with sapphires. There was an aura of competence about the expression of Katherine von Steinbach, the charm of which she seemed totally unaware.

OUR ANGLO-SAXON ANCESTORS WHO LIVED IN GERMANY WERE A HARDY, STURDY AND STUBBORN FOLK—AS WITNESS THIS SPIRITED STORY BY THE AUTHOR OF "OLYMPIAD."

by ALBERT I. MAYER

Illustrated by JOHN RICHARD FLANAGAN

"Grosser Gott!" *exclaimed Herr Martin. "Castle Steinbach men!" Then I saw—*
"Why, that's Kathie!" I faltered.

She was as wholesome-looking as a sunny May day. Lapsing into the vulgar tongue, she said: "Well, Bruno, this seems to surprise you."

I found her beauty breath-taking. "And who would not be?" I inquired with dignity. "You scorn my proposal of marriage. In other words, you refuse to live with me—yet, apparently, are prepared to die with me."

"Now, come, come, Bruno," she said lightly, "the one may have something to do with love; the other—loyalty to our Emperor's cause."

I winced. "Of course," I said, "you may not stay here."

"And why not?" she demanded. "Surely what all Swabia knows, naïve Katherine of Steinbach must also know. Your picked men fight with our Emperor in Italia. You are hopelessly outnumbered. Your decision to defend means that almost certain death stares you in the face. Am I to believe that my arbalists and the Steinbach monks are not welcome and needed?"

"*They*," I said, "are most welcome and sorely needed. *You*—well, this is no place for a woman."

There had been an initial expression of alarm on her face; now, though, she smiled slightly, leaned back comfortably and rested her head against the leg of my chair. "You are quite mistaken, Bruno," she said with a certain decision; "this *is* a place for a woman. Consider that part of my statement most carefully. Now hear the rest of it. This *is* a place for a woman, especially when that woman happens to be your wife."

THE BRAWLER

She was not jesting, and my amazement knew no bounds. As she spoke, there had been a slight quivering of her lips. I had seen it also when she refused me. Then as now her eyes had regarded me momentarily with infinite tenderness. Then as now, for a fleeting second I dared hope that it was her desire that I crush her in my arms.

The spell, however, was broken immediately. "My darling," she added with sweet irony, "forgive me—but I had no recourse. The Bishop of Strassburg informs me that the marriage contract our late fathers made when neither of us was old enough to talk is valid. It cannot be broken. As long as you live, it is you or the nunnery for me. So here I am. We are already married by proxy."

An unbridled rage welled up within me. I stood up, and there was a moment when in my anger I almost took her by the shoulders and gave her a violent shaking. By degrees, I calmed down. "Very well, Kathie," I said finally. "Let us understand each other clearly. Under the Alemanic Statutes, I now own your domains as well as my own. I am the master of both houses. Therefore hear and heed my order: *My* soldiers, here from my newly acquired castle at Steinbach, I intend to employ in the defense of Castle Ritterburg. You, my wife, being in danger of life and limb—I commit to the Ritterburg Monastery for the duration of the siege."

"My lord," she said, looking me straight in the eyes, "your wishes are ever my command. However, permit me also to quote from the Alemanic Statutes: It is required that a husband who is displeased with his wife give the monastery a full month's notice of his intention to do away with her."

"Kathie!" I sputtered. "You are a fool."

"At your command, my lord," she replied.

At dawn Herr Martin climbed the ever-narrowing winding steps of the donjon tower. He rapped on my door. "My lord," he announced, "the enemy is here."

"Come in," I said, "I have been watching them."

"They must be two thousand strong," Herr Martin estimated doubtfully.

I was still peering through the slit. The enemy had come to a halt at the crest of a hill, overlooking the northeast watchtower. Strategically this was sound, for it would allow them to roll their cat and artillery downgrade. They looked most formidable. Their well-polished armor glistened under the sun. The number of fighting men, both on horse and foot in first class accouterment, seemed endless. The long train of supply wagons looked like a huge salamander weaving its way over the hills. In the foreground were the Saxon mercenaries. Their banners flew proudly; the clank of their armor rumbled like far-off thunder.

"Closer to twenty-five hundred, I'd venture to guess," I said over my shoulder.

Herr Martin stirred uneasily. He looked enormous in his iron-studded leather hauberk. He already had his helmet laced. "I am concerned," he said, "about where they are setting up platforms for their artillery. The range is too great for us."

"I noticed that too," I said. "That can only mean that somehow the Brawler has got hold of bamboo beams. If so, we can be reached with sixty-pound stones." After a pause, I added: "We won't be able to defend the outer courtyard. . . . How is the frame of mind of our men?"

"Somewhat apprehensive, naturally, my lord. . . . On the whole, though—good."

I led the way down the winding stairs. Crossing the inner courtyard I caught a glimpse of Kathie's lithe body as she went into the kitchens. She wore one of those full skirts with a lot of intricate embroidery about the hem. It twirled as she walked. Her movements were extremely graceful.

"She was with the serfs' wives until late last night," Herr Martin informed me, "singing to them."

"Maybe," I said, "she was merely trying to keep their minds off of what lies ahead."

"That is possible," Herr Martin conceded. "but this is war. There seems to be no doubt that our women have taken a liking to her. This could be dangerous. The Countess may be contriving. There is no logical reason why she should refuse your hand, then suddenly appear here in this seemingly helpful mood."

"No military man," I said, biting my lips, "could deny the wisdom of your observation."

We stood there a moment or so, glaring at each other. Despite the dictates of common sense, I became angry each time Herr Martin reminded me that Kathie had refused my hand. And furthermore this show of temper was also an aftermath of a discussion Herr Martin and I had held following my private audience with Kathie. He was certain that Kathie was here for some ulterior purpose, and had pointed out the sundry ways in which she and her men could harm us. All this I was willing to concede; but he had made me furious when he'd said he felt it was his duty to mention that his observations had led him to reach the conclusion that

"I am pleased to welcome my ally," I greeted in faultless Latin.

all Kathie had to do was smile sweetly and she could wrap me around her finger. He had made that remark when I said *no* to his proposal that she be sent away by force if necessary.

I had told him that if she were up to something, it was better to have her here where we could watch her. Then he had asked me point-blank if I was in love with her. To which I replied that it was hardly likely, since the marriage had been arranged for by our parents, and I had seen her only three times previously in my entire life—first at the announcement of our engagement, when I was three and she was still in swaddling clothes; second when I was sixteen, and on that occasion she was confined to her bed with a bad case of poison ivy; and finally seven weeks before, when the Bishop of Strassburg told me I must go and propose to her, to which her reply was *no*.

Herr Martin's expression clouded. "What did you find out when you consulted the Statute Books late last night?"

"You may have had a point there," I grumbled. "Apparently, to inherit my estate, my widow must have been my wife for at least a full day."

"But she's been your wife for almost a week."

"That isn't quite enough," I said. "She must also have lived for at least twenty-four hours under my roof."

He frowned deeply. "Possibly, then, she'll be leaving shortly after

dusk. That will dispose of the matter."

"Possibly," I told him.

THE bombardment began around mid-morning. The enemy fired from a trebuchet mounted on a tower. Its initial discharges cleared our outer courtyard, and fell into the farther moat. Shortly, however, the range was corrected. Sixty-pound stones crashed into our stable buildings, demolishing them completely. Horses ran wild over the outer courtyard, frantic, whinnying pitifully. There was nothing for us to do, but call our archers and have the poor beasts destroyed.

The Brawler had either got hold of bamboo beams, or else he had a double trebuchet, more powerful than ours. The range rendered the castle artillery useless. Those few defenders who had duties to perform in the outer courtyard could do little but huddle under the protection of the nearer wall. In the beginning there was opportunity to make a few repairs. From the watchtower, Tycho could see when the enemy lowered its beam to reload. He called down the warning, our men left their work and sought the shelter of the wall.

Shortly, however, the Brawler's engineers had mounted other trebuchets. Now there was no interval between the dropping of stones. They fell thick as hail. The serfs' quarters, the hawkeries, the storehouses and granaries—all wooden buildings were reduced to débris. Palisades and hoarding were dismantled. Flying logs and timbers made precarious the position of those who huddled under the wall. A well-directed projectile found the castle's trebuchet, smashing it to bits. Its counter-beam was hurled high into the air, and it fell on Ludovic the Hawker, crushing him to instant death.

Herr Martin, crawling along the wall walk under protection of the battlements, reported to me in the northeast watchtower. "Our scout has returned, my lord. The Brawler has razed the monastery at Buehl. His supply of proper-sized stone is inexhaustible."

I had anticipated as much. "Order all men to the safety of the inner courtyard," I told him.

The bombardment was intensified. By dusk the Brawler, convinced that the castle artillery was beyond repair, rolled his trebuchets to hundred-pound range. The heavier stones flattened the abandoned outer courtyard to rubble. Projectiles began finding the northeast watchtower. Its stout oak roof, though strengthened with iron, gave way. I stayed until the tower itself began to crumble, then crawled off along the wall walk. Herr Martin met me at the inner barbican. "You had better rest, my lord," he suggested. "For the time being, there is nothing more you can do."

I agreed. Here, I was finding the comparative quiet most soothing. A beautifully clear night was in the making—the air, free of dust, was delightful; the sky was filling with stars. Below in the moat a frog croaked. I listened, half expecting to hear the customary slap of a serf's quieting stick. When, instead, the crash of projectiles in the outer courtyard became louder than ever, I rubbed my hands over my eyes. I was weary, I realized, dreadfully weary.

"Herr Martin," I asked, "is Kathie still here?"

"Yes, my lord. And she gives no intention of leaving."

"Well, what do you make of that?" I asked gruffly.

"I have asked my wife to keep a sharp watch on her," he said, then added significantly: "*'I know a maiden fair to see—'*" He was reciting the first line of a familiar folksong which ran:

I know a maiden, fair to see,
Beware, beware!
Trust her not; she is fooling thee,
She has breasts as white as snow,
Beware, beware!
She knows how much 'tis wise to show,
Beware, beware!
Trust her not; she is fooling thee.

I had sung that song hundreds of times—without thinking too much of what the words meant. My weariness increased. We were no longer in a position to gamble. "Herr Martin," I said, drawing in a deep breath, "fetch Kathie. I'll have a talk with her."

"Yes, my lord," he said; but instead of leaving, he stood there regarding me with considerable concern.

"On your way, Herr Martin," I said angrily. "I don't believe the defense of our castle will be jeopardized by a ten-minute conversation with my wife."

"Yes, my lord," he repeated, and left.

EVENTUALLY Kathie arrived. "My lord," she said, "I beg you to forgive my tardiness—we were quite busy."

I had jumped to the ground at her approach. "Kathie," I said, "there are a number of things which we must discuss. Come—we'll go to the wall walk where it is more restful."

We sat leaning against the battlements, in silence at first, for a sentinel was moving down the wall walk. As he passed us, the rays of his pitch-pine lamp lighted up Kathie's face. Her throat appeared white as a young heron, and as delicately formed. She was looking directly at me, and in her eyes was that expression of infinite tenderness which always set my heart to pounding violently. It was impossible for me to believe that a woman could look at a man in such a manner, without caring. I was determined, though, to look at the matter sanely.

The sentinel passed by. While trying to decide how to begin, I heard Kathie sigh. "What a superb night, Bruno!" she said. "Is it possible that any country in the world can be more comforting than it is along the Rhine?"

Now I submit, there is nothing extraordinary about those few words. They had, though, a most disconcerting effect upon me. "How odd!" I said. "I didn't realize it, but I was thinking practically the same thing."

SHE pointed to the Milky Way. "There is an old pagan belief, Bruno," she said. "Each of those stars is a brave warrior marching to the glory of Valhalla. I am Christian to the core; yet as I look into the heavens—I can almost believe it is true."

I liked the tone of her voice. What she had said thrilled me. It was providential that Herr Martin could not read my soul at that moment. Had he been able to, he would have suffered the tortures of the damned. A savage desire to protect that exquisite creature sitting beside me possessed my entire being. The Almighty alone knows how close I was to saying: "Kathie, I love you better than life itself." Yet so goes the way of the world that it was Herr Martin himself who, unknowingly, came to my rescue. Across the blackness of the inner courtyard, as if in warning, I saw the light of a pitch-pine lamp twinkle at the entrance to our donjon tower. That would be Herr Martin, setting out on inspection. Another part of the folksong he'd quoted ran:

Beware, beware!
She has eyes so soft and brown;
She knows when to look up and down,
Beware, beware!
Trust her not; she is fooling thee.

With tremendous effort I told myself that I was entrusted with the defense of our castle. "Kathie," I said fiercely, "in the recesses of the deep well is a tunnel which will lead you to safety. I beseech you, take it—tonight."

She did not reply; she had turned her head, and I could not see the expression on her face. "Kathie!" I said. "Kathie, did you hear me?"

"Yes, Bruno," she replied sadly, "I heard you."

"Are you aware what your refusal may mean?" I pleaded.

"Possibly not completely," she admitted.

"Kathie," I said, "the critical hour is at hand. It has come earlier than we anticipated. In the blackness of

the night even now the enemy approaches our walls. Under cover of the barrage, the Brawler's archers, wheeling protective mantlets before them, are moving toward our moat. They carry arrows loaded with pitch and sulphur. There is nothing we can do to stop them, for we are too few to sally. They will soon be firing over our walls. The outer courtyard, which is reduced to kindling, will go up in a tremendous blaze."

I continued as earnestly as I knew how: "You understand the Brawler's strategy, don't you, Kathie? When the fire rages at its height, the flames will soar high into the heavens. The Brawler's men can see us, but we won't be able to see them. His engineers will build a runway across our moat. Over this they will drive what is called a cat. . . . You don't know what a cat is, do you, Kathie? . . . A cat is a sturdily constructed shed on wheels. Its roof is pointed, in order that stones dropped upon it will roll off harmlessly. It is covered with wet mud to protect it from Greek fire. Within it are miners, who have a battering-ram. It will be rolled against our wall. By morning we will be undermined. The enemy will have gained access to our outer courtyard."

I HAD scarcely finished speaking when we both heard a sibilant hiss. Overhead a long and luminous path indicated the route of the first enemy arrow. Followed by others, it dropped into our outer courtyard, stinking of sulphur, spreading a sheaf of blue flame that raced over the ground, fed on the rubble, and arose avidly, licking the skies, turning the black night into a scarlet day.

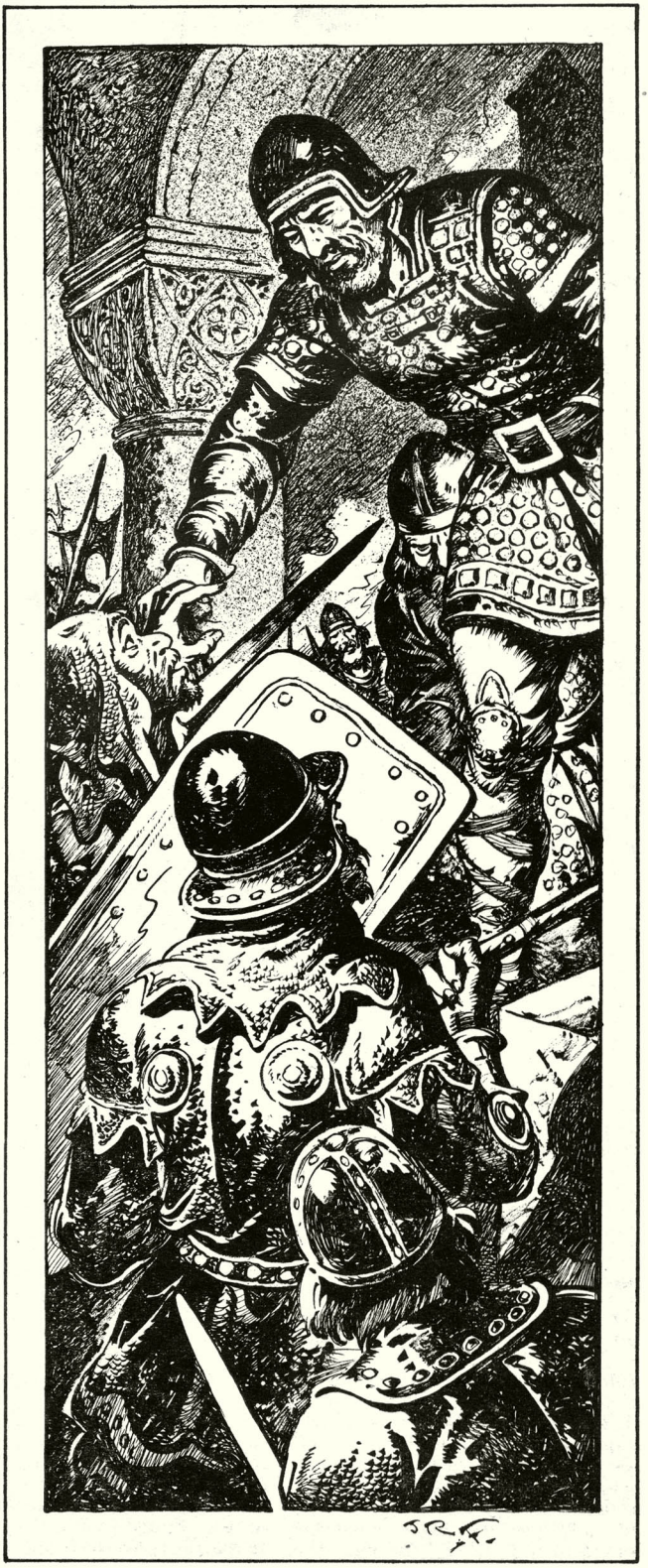
I had jumped to my feet; so had Kathie. Now I could see the terror in her eyes. "Kathie," I urged, "are you convinced now? Won't you leave?"

She clutched my hauberk frantically. "Bruno!" she cried. "Hear me out. I had no idea this was coming so soon. There is so much to talk—"

It took all of my strength to push myself free. "Not now, Kathie! Do what I say—leave the castle."

I jumped to the ground. Herr Martin and Tycho were already at the artificial pond.

Herr Martin rubbed wet mud over my face and neck, and handed me falconer's gauntlets, which protected my arms up to the elbows. He, Tycho and I crawled along the walkway to the remains of the northeast watchtower. The flames of the gigantic conflagration did not touch us, but its heat did. The mud on my face turned hard; perspiration rolled off me; it



Body after body we sent down, but the enemy's manpower was limitless.

Over he toppled, like a marionette whose strings have suddenly been cut.

was like being baked in an oven. Happily, though, the wind was not strong enough to blow the flames on us.

We dared not expose ourselves by looking over the battlements, for no doubt the ground below teemed with archers on the alert for such an act of foolhardiness. The crackling of the flames was too loud for us to be able to hear what progress the enemy engineers were making, erecting a terrace over our moat. There was nothing to do but wait. We had estimated accurately, though, where the enemy cat would strike. When its muzzle crashed against our wall, it was almost directly beneath us. Herr Martin and Tycho dropped to the ground to listen; I listened from the wall walk. At first the enemy engineers worked with picks and shovels. We could not be certain where the mine was being dug but once the battering-ram went into action, we knew.

We had decided upon a barricade, rather than a counter-mine. Serfs brought logs, stones, and bags of flour. We set up the barricade, wetting the flour until it was paste. It was around the false dawn when the first crack in our wall appeared. We sealed the wall walk on either side of it. Serfs brought cases of Greek fire and made ready kettles of hot pitch. Within an hour the breach began widening. It was as if unseen hands were pulling our wall apart. Wider and wider the crevice opened. The wall crashed—the egress, I'd judge, being a good ten feet.

Through it, directly ahead, I could see the pointed roof of the enemy cat. It was thirty-five feet long, capable of housing two hundred men. In the background there was a ring of archers, protected with mantlets. Behind them two corps of Saxon mercenaries were forming. It appeared as if the Brawler planned upon a swift frontal attack.

Behind our barricade we had a light corps of arbalists waiting for him. From the wall walk we threw a case of Greek fire against the snout of the cat. Even as the stinking green smoke arose, a long pole came out of the cat, pushing the case aside.

We dropped others; the egress became invisible, enveloped in a screen of smoke. The first of the enemy helmeted heads seemed to appear by magic. They emerged from the smoke, were almost upon our barricades when we saw them. "Give them a taste of your darning needles!" I shouted to our arbalists.

We dropped the attackers by the score. Our double-axe-bearers smashed in the heads of those who attempted to scale the barricade with ladders. In the egress itself we heard the shrieks of those who were scalded with our hot pitch. It was fighting of a furious nature. The enemy lay dead in heaps. The Brawler was paying heavily to gain access to our outer courtyard.

But gain it, of course, he could. While this initial engagement was

taking place, his miners worked frantically tunneling under our wall. They drove shafts underground and excavated beneath the foundation, supporting the substructure with wooden props. These they set on fire, then retired—and down came another large section of our unsupported wall with a loud crash. Our towers followed. By mid-morning our entire wall from the northeast tower to the drawbridge was gone. In the background I could see that the Saxon mercenaries were ready to move. They were in phalanx formation. I gave the order to retire to our inner courtyard. The Brawler took possession of our outer yard.

By noon his engineers had set up a movable tower. It was a formidable oak structure, possibly eighteen feet high, six feet wide, protected with leather hides. It had been brought into our courtyard in sections. When it was completed, the Brawler's herald shouted: "You are finished, Bruno, Count of Ritterburg. Lay down your arms now, and you will be shown mercy. Fight, and your donjon tower will be smeared with blood."

I called our herald to our inner barbican walk. After me he repeated: "Come ahead, Ruprecht Count of Thuringia, better and more contemptuously named the Brawler. Send forward your mercenaries. They will discover that we have men and provisions, and that the Almighty God is on our side. We have iron and swords and five fingers on our hands. Every man, woman and child will bear arms against you. Our answer is: *The drawn sword and loyalty to our Emperor!*"

The enemy herald and a group of officers standing about him began shaking their fists at us. This, of course, was to impress their mercenaries and possibly to frighten us. They were all well-armored, but one of the officers incautiously opened his hauberk to cool himself. I took up a crossbow, aimed quickly, and let fire. God, I am sure, was with me. My arrow found the man's throat. Over he toppled, like a marionette whose strings have suddenly been cut. From our wall walk a mighty cheer boomed out: *"Kyrie Eleison! Kyrie Eleison!"*

To bring the tower to our barbican wall, the enemy had to fill up the ditches we had dug in our outer courtyard. The stones and still-smoldering débris, created by their own bombardment, had to be cleared away. A plank runway had to be laid down.

They set about the task immediately. A corps of Saxon archers, protected by mantlets, moved forward, covering the engineers. They shot Greek-fire arrows over our barbican wall. Our inner courtyard reeked with stinking smoke. "Order the women to the donjon tower," I told Herr Martin.

"Yes, my lord."

For a fleeting moment I could wonder if Kathie were still here. The enemy's tower began moving. Its progress was slow at first. But forward it surged, relentlessly. By drawing back the beam of a catapult halfway we could throw cases of Greek fire into its path. Flame and smoke made a blazing inferno of the outer-courtyard. Onward rolled the tower, though, like an emissary from hell. A second corps of Saxon archers came forward. A torrent of arrows gushed over our parapets. Crack! Crack! they went as they hit the hoardings.

Herr Martin returned. "The women beg permission to extinguish the fires, my lord."

I turned and looked at him fiercely. "Kathie—is she still here?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Permission is denied," I snapped. "Send them to the safety of the tower."

"Their request is most urgent, my lord," said Herr Martin. "They say that they too are fighting for their homes—and for the men they love."

I began trembling with a wild elation. I grabbed Herr Martin by the hauberk. "I am granting the permission," I told him. "Tell them all to act with caution. . . . Seek out Kathie. Wherever she is, find her! Tell her that I love her."

Our eyes met. "Yes, my lord," said Herr Martin.

The tower advanced. Our catapult could no longer throw cases of Greek fire into its path. It was moving more swiftly now. We fired flaming arrows at its sides. Those within pushed them out of the leather hides. On and on the tower rolled.

It was the more modern kind, that had no drawbridge. Five feet from our wall it came to a halt. At its base were powerful levers. Like a giant, bending his head, the tower leaned over slowly and crashed onto our wall. Up its ladder came the first of the enemy.

Herr Martin, Tycho and I waited for them. We were armed with crowbars. We smashed in heads and sent bodies toppling down the rungs. Beside us the wall walk was barricaded. Our men dropped cases of Greek fire, and hacked at the tower's frame with axes.

Body after body Herr Martin, Tycho and I sent down the rungs of the ladder, but the enemy's manpower was limitless. My shoulders became weary. Beside me Herr Martin, who was no longer a young man, was gasping for breath. The sickening fumes of the Greek fire reached us. Breathing became difficult.

A huge Steinbach monk, powerful as Hercules, jumped over the barricade. "My lord," he said, "our axe-bearers have struck iron. We can't topple the tower from up here."

I handed him my crowbar and took his axe. Over the frantic protests of Herr Martin, I climbed into the tower. Smoke and darkness enveloped me. The enemy on the upper rungs thought I was one of them. I crashed my axe into their temples and sent them tumbling. I was able to climb to the tower's structure and hack away, unnoticed amid the confusion by those who were moving up the ladder. I hacked like a man incensed. . . . My strength left me. There were moments when I was certain that each time I raised my axe must surely be my last, yet I raised it again and again. A dead body crashed against my shoulderblades, knocking the breath out of me. Somehow I managed to hold onto my axe. I clung to the structure, gasping. Up my axe went again.

What followed will always be vague. I must finally have chopped through the structure. I remember climbing the rungs of the ladder in line with the enemy. I remember the tower trembling, seeing light; then I must have fainted. I have no recollection of Tycho and a Steinbach monk pulling me out of the crumbling tower.

It was hours later when I again opened my eyes. I lay in my bed. Herr Martin was sitting beside me. "My lord," he said. "The tower is toppled. That man you killed with your crossbow was the Brawler himself. His underlords are now squabbling amongst themselves. The enemy is withdrawing."

The announcement was of a stupendous nature, and I understood its significance. Castle Ritterburg was saved! Yes, I understood that in its entirety.

"Kathie!" I muttered. "Herr Martin, is she here?"

"Yes, my lord," he said, and I saw the faintest suggestion of a twinkle in his somber agate-gray eyes. "Apparently our suspicions, while a necessary military precaution, were unfounded, my lord. I have gathered that your wife's refusal was not exactly final. She fully expected to take up the matter again at the Tournament of the Lilies, when at the Bishop's insistence you would have been compelled to act as her escort. Unhappily, the siege thwarted her designs."

I don't know how I managed to listen to it all. "Where is she?" I cried.

"If you will but turn your head, my lord," said Herr Martin. "She has never left your side."

Her golden hair brushed against my face. "Kathie," I said, "I love you."

I felt her tears on my cheek. "Thank you, my lord," she whispered. "Say it again and again and again."

The inhabitants of the moon.

A Century

OFTEN IN OUR HISTORY WE HAVE ACCEPTED FANTASY FOR FACT; NOW AND THEN, TOO, THE FANTASY HAS BECOME TRUTH.

IN 1938 the people of the United States, or at least a good number of them, were terrorized by a broadcast which was just an adaptation of an old thriller by H. G. Wells dealing with an invasion from Mars. When they learned that they had been fooled, they made loud and angry noises, calling, among other things, for an investigation.

In 1949 the same broadcast, based on the same old story, fooled all of the inhabitants of Quito. But their anger was more than just vocal; they burned down the radio station, killing six people and wounding at least fifteen others.

In between these two events the people of Tokyo had been fooled in May 1947 by a radio broadcast which described a battle between a sea serpent, invading Tokyo, and American soldiers. Just because the broadcast was in English, the panic did not spread far, but it was reported at that time that General Douglas MacArthur himself telephoned to make sure that this was not the truth.

While these three cases may be labeled hoaxes, they belong to the subclass of unintentional hoaxes. No matter what happened, they were *meant* as entertainment. As for the intentional hoax, it started when one caveman told another caveman about the elephant with six tusks, two trunks and five legs which he had killed after a frightful battle. The first recorded hoax of history is a collection of tales of fearful monsters and other dangers, invented by the Phœnicians to keep Greek and other sailors off their trade routes.

All of which simply means that hoaxes have been with us about as long as speech, and that they will be with us as long as one man has the necessary imagination and the other the necessary credulity. But the time when the hoax—one might almost say "as a form of art"—really flourished, was the Nineteenth Century.

The reason is simple. Just a few decades before the Nineteenth Century started, man had at long last learned to fly. The balloon had been invented. Then came the parachute. In England the voltaic pile helped in discovering new elements that had never been suspected. In Germany a chemist (Wöhler) made urea from inorganic materials, something that had been thought impossible, because urea "could only be produced by the living organism." In America the steamship had been invented; the locomotive came from England soon after. With so many truthful if incredible stories crowding the printed page, the field for the hoax was fertile indeed.

The reasons for the various hoaxes that attained notoriety during the Nineteenth Century were hardly ever the same; they were as diverse as the themes they dealt with. The first big one is still the most famous of the crop. It was:

I. The Inhabitants of the Moon

A HUNDRED and fifty years ago the name of the astronomer Sir William Herschel was as well-known as Albert Einstein's name is today. His son was Sir John Herschel; and when, in November, 1833, Sir John embarked for Capetown to make astronomical observations from the Southern Hemisphere, it was news which was duly printed in the papers. So was the fact of his arrival in Capetown on January 15, 1834.

And on August 25, 1835, the New York Daily *Sun* carried a front-page story about the discoveries made. The *Sun* was quite modest about it. No, Sir John had not corresponded with them. Nor did the *Sun* have a special correspondent in Capetown. It just happened that they had received, from their correspondent in England, a special issue of the *Edinburgh Journal of Science* containing a long report by Sir John Herschel which they reprinted for the benefit of their readers.

The same issue of the paper contained the first installment of the "reprint." It was the description of a new type of telescope used. Bluntly speaking, it was a lot of double-talk about special properties of light rays, angles of incidence, influx of artificial light to brighten the image, and so on. Of course even this new refinement needed a large telescope to begin with, and therefore the new telescope erected on Table Mountain had a main mirror twenty-four feet in diameter. Quite an accomplishment, considering that the 200-inch on Mt. Palomar measures about seventeen feet across!

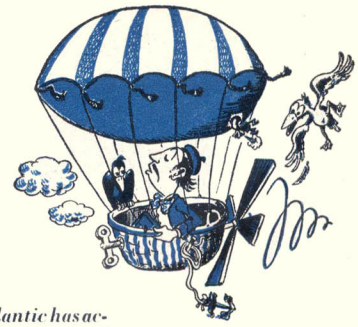
The next issue began to describe the discoveries made. It told of grassy plains on the moon, herds of brown bisonlike animals (but smaller than the North American variety) and of a single animal of a bluish color the size of a goat, but with a single horn on its forehead. The lunar unicorn ended Installment Number Two.

In the following installments readers were treated first to forests and temples with a roof "made of a yellow metal." Then the inhabitants of the moon appeared in person: batmen and bat-women, flying, sitting, conversing, making love.

When it was all over, the office of the *Sun* was beset by many people. Readers asked whether there was more to come. The *Journal of Commerce* wanted to reprint the whole once more; since the *Sun* had taken it from an English scientific journal, the story was obviously not the *Sun's* property. Finally, there were several scientists who wanted to see the original of the *Edinburgh Journal.* The *Sun* had stated that "some forty pages" of mathematics, etc., had been suppressed, since they would be of no

# of Hoaxes

by WILLY LEY

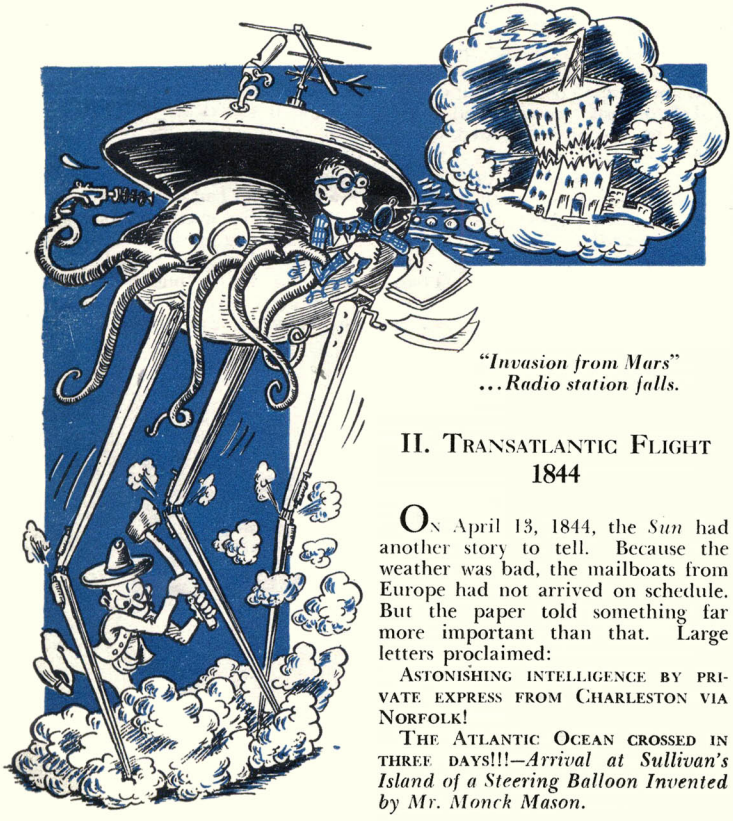


The Atlantic has actually been crossed by a balloon!

interest to the reader. The scientists agreed to that, but they wanted to see them. The *Journal of Commerce* succeeded in learning the truth and told it. Fast.

The whole had been manufactured by one of the *Sun's* staff members, Richard Adams Locke, possibly with the aid of a French astronomer, Jean Nicolas Nicollet, who had just immigrated. Until the *Journal of Commerce* published its report, nobody had doubted the truthfulness of the *Sun*. And even after the truth was known, the piece was still reprinted in pamphlet form a few times and found willing buyers.

It had been a hoax with a purpose: it was to build up the circulation on the *Sun*, then only two years old. In that it had been successful; on the second day the circulation was 19,360 copies, which beat the London *Times* by more than two thousand.



"Invasion from Mars" ...Radio station falls.

II. Transatlantic Flight 1844

On April 13, 1844, the *Sun* had another story to tell. Because the weather was bad, the mailboats from Europe had not arrived on schedule. But the paper told something far more important than that. Large letters proclaimed:

ASTONISHING INTELLIGENCE BY PRIVATE EXPRESS FROM CHARLESTON VIA NORFOLK!

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN CROSSED IN THREE DAYS!!!—*Arrival at Sullivan's Island of a Steering Balloon Invented by Mr. Monck Mason.*

It has to be remarked at this point that Monck Mason was a well-known balloonist at that time, as was a Mr. Robert Holland, who was said to have been aboard too. The *Sun* continued:

> We stop the presses at a late hour to announce that by a private express from Charleston, S. C., we are just put in possession of full details of the most extraordinary adventure ever accomplished by man. *The Atlantic has actually been traversed by a balloon, and in the incredibly brief period of three days!* We have barely time to announce this most novel and unexpected intelligence, but we hope by ten in the morning to have ready an extra with a detailed account of the voyage.

The *Extra Sun*, as it was called, was ready on schedule: a single sheet, 24 by 19 inches, printed on one side only. It is now the rarest paper in the world: just one copy is known to exist, and that not in the newspaper's files.

The *Extra Sun* contained an account of the event, a "reprint" of the journal of the voyage, and a woodcut of a small model of the airship that had made the flight. New Yorkers literally fought over the sheet—possibly the reason why just one was put away—while the other papers did what they could to find out details about the event. Some may have been skeptical from the outset, because the fact that there were no details to be found created remarkably little comment. Later researchers found just one editorial reaction in another paper. That was the New York *Herald*, which stated that news items in their issues were of practical value to business men and no humbug. If the *Sun*, the *Herald* went on, wished to amuse itself by printing such stories that was their privilege. But they should hire a better writer for it.

That was a mistake.

The writer of the *Extra Sun* had been Edgar Allan Poe, already famous

"There were giants in those days."

at that time. He had written the story simply to earn some money. He had just arrived in New York with very little cash in his pockets. In all probability he started this as an outright story, and it grew into a hoax by editorial advice or interference.

Poe had gone to great pains to describe the balloon, which he said was named *Victoria.* It was of elliptical shape, had one propeller, activated by a clockwork mechanism, and one rudder, which could be turned flat to act as an elevator. The material of the balloon was silk, and immediately after inflation it had a lifting power of 2500 pounds. The balloon, Poe wrote, carried a party of "six gentlemen and two sailors" and took off from England to go to France. The propelling mechanism was still in the experimental stage, but the inventor wanted to land as near to Paris as possible.

But soon a high wind came up; the propeller shaft happened to slip out of place and dangled out of reach. When the damage was finally repaired, the ship was well out over the Atlantic with a strong wind still blowing from the east. The balloonists therefore did not try to fight the wind but traveled with it, augmenting its speed with their propeller.

It is an amusing coincidence that Poe figured on a passage of seventy-five hours under the conditions he had assumed. That turned out to be the average time required by the Zeppelins not quite a century later. And one of the "entries" in the "journal" speaks of *icing* in high altitudes. Poe did not just write a story for which he would be paid; he tried hard to visualize how such a trip would look.

His hoax had far-reaching consequences, not in the field of engineering, but in the field of literature. It became known and prompted a young Frenchman to think about a story of a balloon voyage. The name of that Frenchman was Jules Verne.

III. The Case of the Fossil Sea Serpent

In the year which followed the great balloon story, New Yorkers were treated to an even more substantial hoax. One Dr. Albert C. Koch (of whom an outraged German professor said that he was neither a doctor nor a cook, Koch meaning "cook" in German) exhibited on Broadway the skeleton of the extinct animal *Hydrarchus.* Needless to say, that it had been discovered and excavated by "Dr." Koch personally.

Some twenty years earlier the case of the "New England Sea Serpent" had excited learned men and public alike. There had been many sworn affidavits about observations of a strange creature in New England waters, usually in and near Gloucester harbor. The case had a somewhat silly ending and has never been cleared up. But the public knew that there was supposed to be a "sea serpent," in the Atlantic.

Then came Dr. Koch. He stated that he did not feel competent to argue about the existence of living sea serpents. However, he was sure about fossil ones; he had found one. Its skeleton was mounted and could be seen by anybody interested.

Admission: 50c, please.

There were 114 feet of fossil vertebræ mounted in serpentine shape; there were many short ribs and incomplete paddles—"it is well known that fossils are rarely, if ever, completely and fully preserved." There was also a rather small skull, towering high over the spectators. It was all very impressive.

Unfortunately for Dr. Koch, one of the visitors was an expert, one Prof. Wyman who looked hard and long, especially at the skull. He also studied the vertebræ with unusual attention. Then he went home and wrote a report, stating that the skull was that of a mammal and not that of a reptile. Otherwise, it was a genuine fossil. As for the vertebræ, they were genuine too. But their sequence in the mounted sea serpent wasn't. He was sure that the vertebræ of several individuals of the same kind of animal had been joined together. Professor Wyman had seen right; he had made only one mistake. He had written "two individuals," but actually many more than two were involved.

The result of Professor Wyman's report was that Dr. Koch had to pack up and leave. He was next heard from in Dresden, but without a fossil sea serpent. However, he had made money while it lasted.

The bones, incidentally, were no great discovery in themselves. They belonged to *Zeuglodon,* an extinct relative of the present-day whales.

IV. "There Were Giants in Those Days"

The great Moon Hoax had been perpetrated for the purpose of boosting the circulation of a new newspaper. And the Balloon Hoax as well as the "fossil sea serpent" had done what their originators had expected them to do: they had made money. But although money in large amounts was also involved in the case of the fossil giant of Cardiff, the origin of that particular hoax is not so simple. It seems as if it originated with a theological argument, and as if the financial angle did not enter until later, until P. T. Barnum got involved.

The date was October 9, 1869.

The place was a farm, belonging to a Mr. Newell, situated a few miles from Cardiff, New York.

The scene was one of rather common rural activity; laborers were digging a well on the Newell farm. And at some depth they were stopped by a stone which looked like an enormous human foot. Upon digging carefully around it, they found a body attached to that foot, a large stone figure, some eleven feet tall. When fully exposed to view, it was clearly the figure of a man, resting on his back, knees slightly bent and one hand on his abdomen. It looked like the statue of a man who had died in agony.

Before it had even been hoisted out of the hole dug by the laborers, neighbors flocked to the Newell Farm to get a look at the "big Injun." After it had been seen by everybody within easy traveling distance, the "Cardiff

Vaclav Hanka found an old manuscript in ancient Bohemian.

Giant," as it had meanwhile been dubbed, was carted away. At this point P. T. Barnum entered into the story, or rather he took over. The Cardiff Giant was shown in every town which could be reached; it was seen literally by millions of people who gladly paid admission for the privilege, and it made copy for large and small newspapers for years.

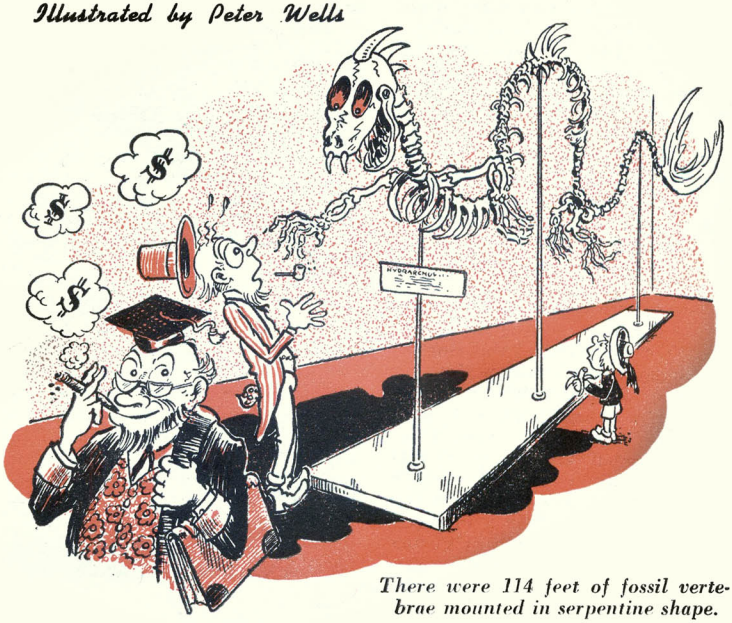
Experts and "experts" looked at it, and all the discussions had a theological tinge, caused by that sentence in the Bible which says that "there were giants in those days." One group insisted that this stone figure was a petrified giant of the kind mentioned in the Bible. Another group, influenced by the finding of scientists that the Cardiff Giant was simply gypsum, modified this statement by saying that it was not a petrified giant, but a life-size statue of one of those giants, carved for unknown reasons by his brethren. A third group, small in number, just believed it to be a statue carved by members of a vanished race, without having any strong prejudice as to the size of that race. A fourth group, small in numbers too at first but gaining rapidly, denounced it as an outright fraud.

By the time the Cardiff Giant no longer made much money, some of the background of the story came out. The statue consisted, just as Prof. O. C. Marsh had said, of gypsum from Iowa. It had been quarried some distance from Des Moines and then been shipped to Chicago, where a professional sculptor by the name of E. Burkhardt had carved the figure. After that, it had been brought to the Newell farm, buried with a lot of rotted boards, to be dug up accidentally two years later.

These facts are generally agreed upon; the purpose is not. Some believe that it was Barnum's idea all along, but this belief seems to be influenced by Barnum's reputation. The other version which says that Barnum just took advantage of something offered to him is much more likely. According to that version, the fake was a case of personal revenge.

One George Hull, reported to have been related by marriage to farmer Newell, had an argument with a Reverend Turk about just that Biblical statement about the giants of old. Rev. Turk took an orthodox position; George Hull was a skeptic (at least with regard to that sentence), but Turk had more practice and was a better talker, and Hull lost the argument. Hull then conceived the idea of a petrified giant, hoping that Turk would accept it as genuine; whereupon Hull would tell the story and still win his argument even if several years later. But then, because of Barnum and the royalties paid by

Illustrated by Peter Wells



There were 114 feet of fossil vertebrae mounted in serpentine shape.

him, the fraud remained unexposed for many more years than Hull had originally planned.

Hull, in his original discussion with Rev. Turk, probably took the position which was emphasized, with much more factual knowledge and authority, by Prof. Marsh later: namely, that all the "giant's bones" ever found and preserved in a lot of places had all turned out to be the bones of large mammals, mostly mastodons, from earlier geological periods. That was perfectly correct, but the ironical twist of the whole story is that they were *all* fighting on the wrong side. In recent years remains of real human giants have been found, first in China and later in South Africa. Because of these remains, we know now what Prof. Marsh could not know: that human giants actually existed. Whether the Biblical mention refers to them or not is still doubtful.

But these real giants did not live in America. And the Cardiff Giant was not one of them.

V. The Manuscript of Koniginhof

The most extensively believed and also most long-lived hoax of the Nineteenth Century actually goes under the name of *Kralovédvorsky Rukopis*, but since many people have trouble pronouncing Czech names, the German-Austrian version of *Königinhof Manuscript* is more common.

The name is derived from that of the small town of *Dvur Kralove* (Czech) or *Königinhof* (Austrian) about a hundred miles from Prague. In either version the name means "Queen's Court," because its founder, King Wenceslas of Bohemia, gave it to his wife. The King died in 1305.

Except for its high age and an incidental rôle in military history as a battleground of the Hussite Wars, nothing was very remarkable about the city until 1817. In that year a young man by the name of Vaclav Hanka "found" an old manuscript in the tower of the church. He told that at first he thought it to be a Latin chronicle, but when looking at it more closely, he saw that it was in ancient Bohemian, a language he happened to know well. Only a few years earlier he had written and published a book on ancient Bohemian grammar.

The manuscript consisted of a number of poems, epical and lyrical, written with several inks of different colors by a very careful hand. Hanka took it to Professor Josef Dobrovsky of Prague, then the greatest authority on ancient Bohemian and related languages. Dobrovsky was pleased with the find, as any philologist would be. The ancient manuscript was copied, translated into modern Czech, and both versions were published together. One year later a translation into German appeared.

During the year after the publication of the German translation, Professor Dobrovsky had reason to become highly indignant. One Josef Kovar visited him, carrying with him a short "fragment" of a manuscript from the Eighth Century, consisting of two incomplete songs. Dobrovsky saw at once that it was a forgery, and

that this so-called Grünberg Manuscript had been produced maybe a year or so earlier. He had correspondence with a British linguist about other matters but mention of the fake got into that letter, as it will in professional correspondence between fellow-scientists. He wrote: "Not satisfied with the Königinhof Manuscript from the Thirteenth Century, some young men manufacture others said to be older so as to outdate the older folk songs of other nations."

Professor Dobrovsky died in 1829, and his successors, sorting his papers, prepared translations of the songs of the Königinhof Manuscript into all European languages; the translations appeared in a magnificent volume in 1852. Six years later somebody began to launch anonymous attacks against the manuscript, at first merely doubting that it was as old as it was claimed to be. In 1859 a Professor Büdinger of the University of Vienna came out openly with doubts. Naturally, there were counterattacks. But this was only a mild prelude for the sound and fury that was to follow.

Professor Julius Fejfalik of Prague opened the battle proper by writing a book which fell just short of saying in so many words that the famous Königinhof Manuscript was a forgery. He said that the vellum was old, but that the inks used looked new. He also pointed out that the letters were not precisely what one should expect a scribe of the Thirteenth Century to have used. They were quite similar to the letters of that period. But there were differences. Moreover, the hand was much too careful for any scribe, even if he wanted to show himself at his best. The letters were painted and not written. And the critic was especially suspicious of one poem in which a peasant girl complains because she has no parchment and ink to write to her lover who has been "called away!"

Unfortunately the discussion at once degenerated into a political fight. Professor Fejfalik had attacked a spurious manuscript; his countrymen felt that he had attacked their national honor. Fejfalik was not told that he was mistaken; he was told that he was a traitor. Conversely, anybody who defended the genuineness of the manuscript was called a "great scholar."

If it had not been for a really great Czech scholar, a useless discussion might still be going on. But this relatively young man, then only thirty-six years old, declared that national honor consisted in establishing the truth. And he wrote the truth as he saw it. He himself provided a sociological criticism of the poems—it was devastating. He made the historian Professor Goll examine the historical hints in the poems and compare them with the historical facts—and they did not match. He asked the philologist Gebauer to examine the language of the poems. Gebauer proved that it was not a collection of songs by many authors; it was the style of *one* man. And the grammar was not what philologists in 1886-'7 knew to have been the grammar of the Thirteenth Century, but the grammar about which Hanka had written.

Fortunately, Professor Dobrovsky was dead by then; it would have grieved him to find that this manuscript was a forgery too. But the man who had risked his whole career on this exposé became very famous later on. And nobody could ever say that he was not a good patriot.

He was Thomas G. Masaryk, who became the first president of Czechoslovakia.

VI. The German Annexation of Patagonia

The last major hoax of the Nineteenth Century differs from the others mainly in that there was neither money, nor fame, nor a political issue, nor anything else involved. It "merely happened."

Late in 1886 no less a paper than the London *Times* informed its readers that it had learned from "a usually reliable source" that Germany had annexed a portion of Patagonia. More specifically "a personal representative of Prince Bismarck, Professor Ludwig Brackebusch," had performed the *coup d'état*. The annexed portion was the southwestern area of Patagonia, west of 54 degrees western longitude and south of 48 degrees southern latitude. That area, it was stated, was important because it had just proved itself to be good tobacco land, and because the wood of the "vinegar pear" growing there in abundance was a very useful hardwood.

This area has proved itself to be good tobacco land.

The source of the *Times* was reliable enough; it was the *Berliner Tageblatt* which usually could be counted upon to know what it was printing. It seems that a German language paper in the Western Hemisphere copied the report directly from its source too, so that German and British sources seemed to corroborate each other. Although a German colony in South America did not seem as menacing in 1886 as it would have in any later period in history, the interested nations held some conferences behind closed doors. And then they inquired in Buenos Aires.

The government of Argentina proved to be singularly uninformed about the event itself. But it could, after some searching, provide information about the culprit. Dr. Ludwig Brackebusch was a resident of Argentina; more specifically he was a professor at the University of Córdoba. He had been born in Germany, had studied geology at the University of Göttingen and had gone to Argentina in 1872 to teach geology.

The next step was to question the Professor, who could be found at his university with little trouble. He knew about "his" case; he had read it in several newspapers in assorted languages, English, Spanish and German, mailed to him by friends and former students. But that was all he knew about it.

By the time he was officially questioned, retractions had already appeared. Tracing dates and references, inquiring minds found that the whole thing had originated in the local paper of the Professor's small home town. Its editor had received a letter from a student in Göttingen. There had been a reference to the fact that Dr. Brackebusch had studied at that university, which could be checked, and a reference to the fact that he was a native of the town where the editor lived; he could check that too. Since these two facts were indubitably facts, the editor had taken the rest of the letter at face value. And progressively larger papers had copied the story from his little newssheet.

Nobody had paid attention to a few minor facts: That the arid steppes of southern Patagonia cannot be good tobacco land should have been obvious. That there is no such tree as the "South American vinegar pear" should have been easy to establish. That southwestern Patagonia had been ceded to Chile only five years earlier should have been fresh in the minds of newspaper-men. And that 54° W., 48° S. is a spot in the ocean, six hundred miles east off the Patagonian coast, could have been found with a single glance at the map.

The Woman in Ward 13

A brief bitter drama from a newspaper office.

by E. P. Mc GUIRE

THE doctor frowned and looked across his desk at the stocky young man with the flashlight camera dangling from his hand.

"I suppose I'll have to give you permission," he said. "This is a county hospital; I haven't any right to refuse. But my God, don't you newspaper guys ever hate yourselves? This poor woman was obviously half crazy—must have been, to do what she did. Do you have to make it worse by smearing her picture all over the front page?"

Jerry Scofield's mouth tightened. "It's an assignment," he said. "I can't duck it. It's part of my job."

The doctor scrawled his name across a pass.

"All right," he said. "She's in Ward 13. But did you ever think of getting another job?"

"If I don't go back to the office with this picture," Jerry Scofield said, "I'll need another job."

A flicker of sympathy crossed the doctor's face. "Tough city editor?"

Jerry nodded. "They don't come any tougher."

A picture of Billings came up in his mind: the granite face, the merciless eyes, the dead cigar rammed into one corner of the scar-straight mouth. Tough, all right. And proud of it. Billings had come up the hard way: he despised any other. He drove reporters and photographers unmercifully—the way he drove himself. "Remember this," he liked to say: "there's no room on this newspaper for gentlemen. Only one thing counts: circulation. I want men who're willing to cut their own mothers' throats to get it—see?"

Billings got the circulation, all right. He got it with pictures like this one.

Jerry took the pass. "Think she'll be conscious, Doc?"

"I doubt it," said the doctor. "She just came down from the operating-room." He looked at his watch. "She jumped only two hours ago."

"Will she live?"

"How should I know?" said the doctor angrily. "I'm not God. Go on, now, get out of here."

The hospital corridors were clotted with people: visitors, patients, doctors, internes, harassed-looking nurses. Over them all hung the thick lifeless smell of antiseptics and pain and suffering. At the entrance to Ward 13 Mickey Hogan was pacing up and down. He was the reporter assigned to the story by Billings. He did the writing; Jerry handled the photography.

He glanced up quickly. "Get the pass?"

"Yes," Jerry said. "I got it."

"Well, look," Hogan said. He always talked fast, spitting out the words like bullets. "It's nearly noon. The nurse says she's still unconscious—may be that way for an hour or more. So she's no good to me. I'm going back to the shop—write a quickie for the first edition. Billings'll murder me if I don't. You go on in and shoot the picture, and hurry down with it. I may come back later. Make it snappy, chum."

He disappeared down the corridor. Jerry walked into Ward 13. It was not a large room. Screens were drawn around a bed in one corner. He moved forward, and a tart voice said: "Hey, you! Where do you think you're going?"

The nurse was small and red-headed and not particularly pretty. Jerry took out the pass the doctor had given him. She glanced at it briefly.

"Okay," she said. She added, contemptuously: "Vulture."

JERRY felt the blood come up in his face. "I'm sorry," he told her. "I don't like doing this any more than you would."

She nodded slowly. "It's not your fault, I guess." She led him over to the corner. Through an opening in the screen he could see the lower half of the still figure lying in the bed.

"Tell me," said the nurse, "how far did she fall?"

"Six floors; landed on the roof of a car parked outside the hotel—a convertible. Otherwise—"

"Yes," said the nurse. "Otherwise! Why did she do it?"

Jerry shrugged. "Don't know yet. Registered under an assumed name at nine-fifteen. Jumped at nine-thirty. The police are checking. Mind if I go on in?"

"Go ahead," said the nurse. "She won't know you're there, thank God."

Jerry went in. He looked at the pale face on the pillow. It was curiously serene and untroubled. The woman's breathing was almost imperceptible. One arm was in a cast; a flask of blood plasma was draining slowly into the other. Jerry stared for a moment, then raised his camera. The flash-bulb flared.

BACK at the office Jerry picked up his phone and called Billings. "This is Scofield," he said. "Could I see you for a minute?"

"Did you take that picture?" Billings snapped. "Has the lab got it for processing?"

"I took it," Jerry told him. "I'd like to see—"

"Later," Billings said, and hung up.

Jerry leaned back in his chair and watched the wall clock. Eighteen minutes later the office boy tapped him on the shoulder. "Boss wants you, pal. *Pronto.*"

Billings sat at the desk, chewing the dead cigar savagely. His sleeves were rolled up, showing his corded forearms. He held a negative in his hand. "Look, you!" he said. "This negative's light-struck."

"I know," Jerry said.

"You *know?*"

"Yes. On the way back to the office I exposed it."

Billings' face grew purple. "You exposed it *deliberately?*"

"Yes."

Billings' big hands gripped the edge of the desk. "I suppose you disapprove of taking pictures of this kind."

"Yes," Jerry said, "as a matter of fact, I do."

"You're fired!" His voice shook the walls. "Damn you, get the hell out of here! You're fired!"

"All right," Jerry said steadily. "But I've got to tell you something before I go. I recognized the woman."

"Oh, you did, hey?" Billings was sneering, now. "And you decided you'd spare her the publicity just because she was a friend of yours. That's fine, Sir Galahad, that's just fine!"

"She isn't a friend of mine," Jerry said. "And I'd have exposed that film no matter who she was. I like to think so, anyway."

He walked over and put his hand on the doorknob. "I recognized her because I've seen her here at the office. I've seen her here with you. That's your wife over there in the County hospital." He opened the door slowly. "I'm terribly sorry for you, Mr. Billings," he said.

Then he closed the door quietly and walked away.

It's Always the Way

Casey was a good guy, but tried to prove he wasn't. *by* EUSTACE COCKRELL

YOU never know what will happen when you fool around with a typewriter, especially if it's a Chicago typewriter—or as it's shown on an invoice: *Thompson Submachine Gun (1).*

Casey Beaumont was the recipient of what once happened. Casey was walking home late one night, minding his own business; but because it was late, taking a shortcut down the alley behind Mark's Jewelry Store, when he saw two parties unknown emerge from the back door of the store carrying suitcases and start running.

Casey hollered and ran after them. It was a kind of reflex action, and like most such actions far over on the stupid side, because one of the parties stopped at the corner at the other end of the alley and wrote *"Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party,"* with his typewriter, and some of it he wrote on the bottom of Casey's vest.

Nobody ever did figure out why a couple of petermen cracking a crib should be carrying that kind of armament, but that is beside the point. The point being, as they put it at the hospital early the next morning: "No hope is held for the recovery of Karl C. Beaumont."

The neighborhood grieved. Casey was a good guy. Casey was aces.

The old folks around the neighborhood said: "It's always the way." And they said it because of Johnny Grogan.

Johnny Grogan had been Casey's buddy. They'd buddied as little kids, then in the war, all through in the same outfit. Close as a dead heat they were until they came home from the war together and fell in love together—with the same girl!

Casey was steady and sober; Johnny was lazy and gay.

Casey went to work. Johnny didn't. And to live without visible means of support, you have to have invisible means of support and people figured they had caught up with Johnny Grogan's invisibly supporting himself.

The D.A. had a weak case against Johnny, really, largely circumstantial. Johnny was supposed to have stuck up a filling station and taken cash and checks. They never found any of the stuff that Johnny was supposed to have taken but they found someone who said it was Johnny that did it, they'd seen him. Johnny got one to five and had done a week when Casey headed off the Tommy-gun slugs.

The girl that Johnny and Casey had both fallen in love with was named Carolyn Miller, a comptometer operator for the gas company, with a lustre to her that would light up a tenement hall, but not too bright in the head—in the judgment of the neighborhood—having fallen in love with Johnny Grogan when just as easy she could have had Casey, who even looked a great deal like Johnny, and was steady, and had a job besides.

Carolyn had cried when she told Casey she was engaged up with Johnny; perhaps knowing in the recesses of her heart that she had picked a wrong gee. She had cried and said she couldn't help it, and then kissed him on the brow. And then she cried again at Johnny's trial and vowed that she would wait for him forever.

And when she heard about Casey in the hospital, she really cried.

Casey Beaumont lay in the hospital with what felt like a blowtorch in his belly and half out of his head with dope. He lay there, and the two big things in his mind were Johnny Grogan—Carolyn Miller notwithstanding, for he'd loved Johnny all his life—and dying, for he'd loved life all his life too. And he knew for sure he was going to die, just as sure as he knew Carolyn Miller loved Johnny.

BUT loving Johnny became unimportant because he was dying; and loving life became unimportant too.

And then it occurred to him that he wasn't dead, and that until he died he had to live just as does everyone; that he just had a shorter time. And out of that thought grew another, and when the nurse came in with a needle, he shook her off and asked her to get him the D.A. "And a stenographer," he added, remembering just in time.

They came. They whispered with the Doctor in the hall, and then they came into the room, and the stenographer sat down, and the D.A. looked down at Casey and smiled. Casey was white, and his hair and eyes looked as if they were painted on his skin.

He said carefully: "The job you sent Johnny Grogan up for, it was mine."

The District Attorney said: "You are just making a play, kid. Johnny did it all right."

"No. I figured they would hang it on Johnny, and it worked out like I thought. Johnny and I went for the same girl, and I figured with Johnny away I could wind up with the girl. Well, I got Johnny away. But now I'm going away too."

Casey had figured it very carefully. He had been at the trial, Johnny's trial, all the way through and he knew what had gone on that night at the filling station and he answered very convincingly all the questions the D.A. tried to mix him up with.

And just as the thing was winding up, with the D.A. just leaving to set in motion wheels to right a miscarriage of justice, Carolyn Miller came over, to see if Casey Beaumont was still of the living.

They told her what had happened and she went into his room and knelt by his bed. He tried to reach out his hand and pat her head but he couldn't make it; and she knelt there and sobbed.

"Johnny'll be out in a few days," Casey whispered, for he was tired from the questioning. "Live happily ever after."

Carolyn looked up and her eyes were big and wet. "Oh, Casey!"

"Walk straightly with him in love," Casey said, feeling the moment called for a fairly high-flown sentence structure. "Name your first son Casey," he added, knowing instinctively any corn would go, in such a setting.

Carolyn said again, fighting with her sobs: "Oh, Casey!"

"You have your life to live, and Johnny has his life to live, and I have my little bit of life to live too. And never you wonder if I held up the station, for I did—hoping it would go like it did: that they'd put Johnny away for the crime."

"Oh, Casey, darling," Carolyn said at last, *"you* couldn't do a thing like that."

"The hell I couldn't," Casey whispered. "I loved you, Carolyn."

THE nurse came in then and ran Carolyn out, and it was just as well, for she could—save for that one line in which she doubted Casey's ability to hold up a filling station—manage

very little contributory dialogue except an occasional, "Oh, Casey!"

Casey lived through the night on the nether edge of death, hopped up almost beyond hurting, and fairly pleased with himself, withal.

The Doctor who had issued the first bulletin came in and observed the slightly living Casey the following morning, and frowned and went away.

The day went by, and again Casey didn't die.

The D.A. had moved fast, and when next came Carolyn to the deathbed, Johnny Grogan came with her.

"Hello, Casey," Johnny said. "I hear *you* held up the filling station."

Casey looked at him meaningfully and then toward Carolyn Miller. He nodded.

"With a good job and all," Johnny Grogan asked, "what the hell did you want to do a thing like that for?"

"I needed the money," Casey said.

"He needed the money," Johnny said to Carolyn. Then he added: "I have known this guy all my life, and I don't get it."

Carolyn sobbed and went into her "Oh, Casey!" routine.

Johnny Grogan said embarrassedly: "How are you feeling, Casey?"

"He's dying," Carolyn wailed. "Don't you see he's dying?"

"Is he?" Johnny said. "He looks kind of peaked, but not *too* bad."

AND for a fact Casey didn't look too bad. It took a minute for this to penetrate, but then Carolyn ran for the Doctor, and the Doctor came and looked at Casey, and then he took Carolyn into the hall.

"I stick to my original prognosis," the Doctor said, then added peevishly: "But if he gets well, it won't be the first time I've been double-crossed."

Carolyn rushed back into the room and knelt again beside the bed. "Oh, God," she howled, "let Casey get well!"

Johnny Grogan frowned. "They'd try Casey for the stick-up."

Carolyn hadn't thought of that. She whirled on Johnny Grogan.

"Why don't you admit you did it, you—you rat?"

"But honey, I didn't do it. It was like I said in court: I was down on the docks by myself at the time—"

"I'll die," Casey said lugubriously. "And you can walk hand in hand through life—"

"I wouldn't walk to the corner with that jerk," Carolyn said.

"I'll see you tomorrow," Johnny Grogan said, "when this silly broad ain't here. You'll probably get probation."

By the time Casey was released from the hospital, Carolyn was married to a widower who read meters for the gas company, for Casey's convalescence was very slow, and Johnny Grogan was running the filling station that he and Casey had gone partners to buy, and the police had caught the guys who had shot Casey after robbing Mark's Jewelry Store; and sure enough they found some of the checks from the filling station stick-up on one of them, and *his* confession stuck.

They say, the old folks around the neighborhood: "It's always the way," but then they say that about anything.

The Peshtigo Fire

THE Chicago fire of 1871 is generally regarded as the great fire in American history, but there was a conflagration that was more vast and much more terrible than that of the Windy City.

It broke out one dry Sunday in the lumber town of Peshtigo, Wis., shortly after people had returned to their homes from church worship. Several sporadic forest-fires were smoking in near-by woods—the result of a three-months' drought—but no one paid them much attention.

And then, while everyone prepared to make himself comfortable for the remainder of the Sabbath, it happened! As a journalist of that day reported:

"In one awful instant a great flame shot up in the western heavens and in countless fiery tongues struck downward on the village, piercing every object that stood in town like a great red-hot bolt."

It didn't seem to be like any other known conflagration. It was more like a tornado, only instead of just roar and furious movement, the air was filled with unbearable heat.

Enveloped on all sides and roasting alive, the people ran for the Peshtigo River; but many never made it, suffocating on the way in the searing heat or being trampled to death by maddened cattle.

Those who did make it to the river were to endure hours of agony—and many met death there also.

Those who could, crowded themselves on the flats, but floating burning timber from falling buildings at the edges of the river, continually harassed them. And so intense was the heat, even over the river, that many of those who kept their bodies submerged in the water had their hair singed off.

Some found the heat so intolerable that they deliberately waded into water over their heads and drowned themselves. Others were trampled by the panicked cattle or wild game which plunged into the river. Some, blinded by the heat and groping through the water, stepped into deep water and drowned.

A group of firemen, with heroic desperation, went through the gestures of trying to put out the fire at a large mill on the banks of the river, but so great was the heat that the hose instantly leaked from a thousand different places.

Some of the people locked themselves up in brick buildings but they fared no better than those who ran to the river. The buildings turned into crematories and the bodies of scores of suffocated victims were later removed from these buildings.

Some inhabitants made their way into the depths of their wells, but most of these also were suffocated.

When the fire was over, only two wooden things in the town remained standing: one house and a wooden cross in a cemetery. Some six hundred persons had perished, fully half the town's population.

Fresh from church, some of the people thought that the heavens had opened up and unloosed fire upon them. At least one family refused to budge from their home, and convinced this was Doomsday, calmly prepared to meet their Maker. They were never seen again.

In many instances human remains could be distinguished from animals only by the teeth.

While the fire was at its holocaust-worst at Peshtigo, this was only the beginning of the devastation. A furious force ten miles wide, with the speed and relentlessness of a tornado, it swept through six counties, destroying in its course much of Menominee, Mich.

All in all, this fire took at least one thousand lives and perhaps as many as twelve hundred—more than twice the number of lives lost in the Chicago fire. Damage done by the Windy City fire is estimated at $196,000,000. It is all but impossible to estimate the Peshtigo loss in dollars and cents, but considering the valuable timber destroyed and all the rich top soil—which had been millions of years in the making and which slid from denuded hills into the river—cost of the Peshtigo conflagration can be reckoned only as having been high in the millions of dollars, and its loss was of a more irreplaceable quality than that sustained in Chicago.

But perhaps the strangest thing of all was: The Peshtigo fire broke out on October 8, 1871—the very same day as the Chicago fire!

—*by* Harold Helfer

He'd been ordered to destroy the elephants that were trampling crops. . . . And then he saw a magnificent primeval scene—the elephant herd playing under the waterfall.

The Governor

AT night the elephant herds come down to drink at the Leru River. Custom dies hard, and since the megatherium roamed the earth, and man, if he existed, was helpless as a monkey, the herds have made free with the water.

Unfortunately elephants are clumsy drinkers; they break down banks and stir up the bottom, and for days afterward the water flows muddy and tainted. This does not worry the elephants; they visit other streams until the first one clears. The land was once theirs to do with as they pleased; they cannot understand that conditions have changed.

The officials and shopkeepers of Leru strongly objected to the fouling of their water supply. The native agriculturalists were no less angry at the destruction of their crops which followed the monsters' visits. The Leru herd must be exterminated!

The work was put into the hands of Ben Little, an official of the Game Department. He was a peculiar man, who had lived most of his fifty years in the wilds, and was apt to regard all innovations as deplorable. He did his duty as a game ranger, but no one knew if he enjoyed it or admired it. In a moment of unusual loquacity, he had been heard to say he preferred most game to most men, which people thought to be humorous and insincere disparagement.

Ben Little arrived at Leru and made his camp on the greensward below the *boma*. He paid a cursory visit to Price, the District Commissioner, and was received with the slightly patronizing friendliness with which a gentleman might welcome a new gamekeeper. Thereafter he kept to himself and went about his work.

To Mackenzie, the storekeeper, he announced that he had come to: "Clean up the elephants, so that you fellows won't be worried." He added that there did not seem to be room for men and beasts in this country, big as it was, and whereas a man would put up with a noisy, disreputable neighbor, when annoyed by an animal his thoughts at once turned to slaughter. Mackenzie, a stanch Presbyterian, pointed out that to love one's neighbor was enjoined, but that the beasts must perish.

Ben bought tins of beans and tobacco and departed to his camp. He took Salim, his black hunter, and went to the river to survey the ground.

The stream came down with a rush out of the mountain forest and splashed over a glorious fall into a pool it had dug for itself. Thence it was conducted under the road by a concrete culvert. It appeared the elephants were fond of bathing under the waterfall, and they left the pool a quagmire. Ben saw signs of their last visit, a week before.

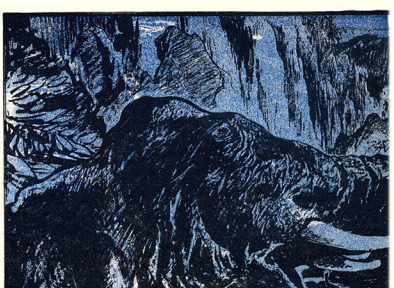
He stood leaning on the wall of the culvert, visualizing the scene of a moonlight night, dozens of huge beasts disporting themselves, screaming with pleasure as the white water cascaded off their wrinkled backs. They were friendly, had never been known to hurt man; but they were destructive to man's property. Ben reflected that in years to come, people would be willing to pay heavily to visit that place and watch the elephants playing in the waterfall. But by that time they would be part of the historic past. Hotelkeepers would point out where they had been, and the tourist must feast on the romantic memory. "The Elephants' Bath," they might call it, and send picture postcards of it to their friends, saying: "Only a few years ago elephants used to bathe here under the moon. Isn't it wonderful to think of!"

Ben sighed lugubriously, circumambulated the cliff, and made his way upriver into the forest. Salim followed unobtrusively, never speaking unless invited.

It was very wild under the big trees; vegetation rioted, bound inextricably with spiked monkey-rope and flexible liana. Brilliant birds and cheerful monkeys went about their affairs in the tops of the high trees, enlivening the scene with noise and color, which would otherwise tend to be gloomy with heavy green and warm silence.

Ben knew that a sawmill had been established here somewhere; the timber would be felled to make chairs and tables. Then it was proper for the elephants to go, for elephants cannot live among chairs and tables.

He'd been ordered to destroy the elephants that were trampling crops. . . . And then he saw a magnificent primeval scene—the elephant herd playing under the waterfall.



The Governor in Council

by C. T. STONEHAM

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Ben commonly sat on the ground to eat, and liked to have big trees about him while he did so. Thank heaven, they would not all be turned into chairs and tables in his day!

"Progress," he said to his boy, "is necessary. Where, or why, I don't know. But when you have little appetite, it is nicer to eat off a table; and when you can't sleep, it's more comfortable to lie in a bed. That's logic, isn't it?" Salim, who knew no English, but was used to his master's eccentricities, agreed heartily.

"Come on," said Ben. "We're not here to talk rubbish, but to kill elephants."

They continued through the warm gloom, following the old trail of the herd. They found another stream and another bathing-place. The elephants had gone on deeper into the hills; Ben retraced his steps to camp.

For the next three days he did nothing. People passing saw him sitting under a tree reading, wasting his time. There was unfavorable comment among the officials at the little club, but they supposed the ranger knew his business and could not be interfered with.

Though Ben's days were idle, his nights were busy. When the moon rose, he would take his rifle and walk up to the forest, where he mooched about like one of the animals themselves.

One night the elephants came back. Ben heard them on the trails; he concealed himself and watched. A long line of giants passed him; he counted forty-three. Most were cows, some of which had half-grown calves at foot. The leader was a fine bull; Ben judged him twelve feet tall. His ivory was short and thick, not more than sixty pounds to the tusk. There were several younger bulls in the midst of the herd, and the rear was brought up by another splendid tusker who might have been the leader's brother.

They filed along down to the waterfall, and Ben stole to the top of the cliff and crouched there in the bushes, delighted to watch them at their games. The leader stood on the bank for a minute pushing out his trunk this way and that, searching the wind for taint of an enemy. The cows clustered behind, silent and dutiful. The second bull came up beside his brother to occupy himself with a like investigation. The two huge beasts lowered their trunks and playfully entwined them, as if in mutual congratulation of a safe journey. Then shrill screams broke out, and the herd plunged ponderously into the bath.

Amidst a smother of white foam from the cascade, they wallowed, drawing water into their trunks to squirt it over their backs and at each other. A pandemonium of trumpeting and screaming echoed from cliff and tree. It was a happy scene, and Ben was cheered by it. The pool would not contain the whole herd at one time, but there was no pushing for place; they waited in relays for their turn. The young calves, seeming more serious than their elders, moved sedately beside their dams, and were duly hosed down and cleansed.

For an hour the fun was at its height; then the press in the pool thinned; the cows stood about on the banks while the two old bulls disported themselves among the laggards. They were no less noisy and carefree, throwing off the responsibilities of leadership to frolic with the youngsters and each other. Finally they all went on across the road into the natives' shambas, where soon an uproar of shouting and drumbeating announced that the husbandmen were trying to protect their crops from the destructive beasts. Ben went back to his blankets in a thoughtful mood. He was reluctant to declare war on the elephants, but they must be prevented from wreaking this havoc. But how?

The next morning the District Commissioner sent for him to complain that the herd had done great damage. The river water was yellow and foul; several millet gardens had been trampled out of existence. What was Little going to do about it?

Little had not quite decided: he was looking the situation over.

"The sooner you begin operations, the better," said Price curtly. "The Governor is coming through here

by

C. T. STONEHAM

in Council

Ben commonly sat on the ground to eat, and liked to have big trees about him while he did so. Thank heaven, they would not all be turned into chairs and tables in his day!

"Progress," he said to his boy, "is necessary. Where, or why, I don't know. But when you have little appetite, it is nicer to eat off a table; and when you can't sleep, it's more comfortable to lie in a bed. That's logic, isn't it?" Salim, who knew no English, but was used to his master's eccentricities, agreed heartily.

"Come on," said Ben. "We're not here to talk rubbish, but to kill elephants."

They continued through the warm gloom, following the old trail of the herd. They found another stream and another bathing-place. The elephants had gone on deeper into the hills; Ben retraced his steps to camp.

For the next three days he did nothing. People passing saw him sitting under a tree reading, wasting his time. There was unfavorable comment among the officials at the little club, but they supposed the ranger knew his business and could not be interfered with.

Though Ben's days were idle, his nights were busy. When the moon rose, he would take his rifle and walk up to the forest, where he mooched about like one of the animals themselves.

One night the elephants came back. Ben heard them on the trails; he concealed himself and watched. A long line of giants passed him; he counted forty-three. Most were cows, some of which had half-grown calves at foot. The leader was a fine bull; Ben judged him twelve feet tall. His ivory was short and thick, not more than sixty pounds to the tusk. There were several younger bulls in the midst of the herd, and the rear was brought up by another splendid tusker who might have been the leader's brother.

They filed along down to the waterfall, and Ben stole to the top of the cliff and crouched there in the bushes, delighted to watch them at their games. The leader stood on the bank for a minute pushing out his trunk this way and that, searching the wind for taint of an enemy. The cows clustered behind, silent and dutiful. The second bull came up beside his brother to occupy himself with a like investigation. The two huge beasts lowered their trunks and playfully entwined them, as if in mutual congratulation of a safe journey. Then shrill screams broke out, and the herd plunged ponderously into the bath.

Amidst a smother of white foam from the cascade, they wallowed, drawing water into their trunks to squirt it over their backs and at each other. A pandemonium of trumpeting and screaming echoed from cliff and tree. It was a happy scene, and Ben was cheered by it. The pool would not contain the whole herd at one time, but there was no pushing for place; they waited in relays for their turn. The young calves, seeming more serious than their elders, moved sedately beside their dams, and were duly hosed down and cleansed.

For an hour the fun was at its height; then the press in the pool thinned; the cows stood about on the banks while the two old bulls disported themselves among the laggards. They were no less noisy and carefree, throwing off the responsibilities of leadership to frolic with the youngsters and each other. Finally they all went on across the road into the natives' shambas, where soon an uproar of shouting and drum-beating announced that the husbandmen were trying to protect their crops from the destructive beasts. Ben went back to his blankets in a thoughtful mood. He was reluctant to declare war on the elephants, but they must be prevented from wreaking this havoc. But how?

THE next morning the District Commissioner sent for him to complain that the herd had done great damage. The river water was yellow and foul; several millet gardens had been trampled out of existence. What was Little going to do about it?

Little had not quite decided: he was looking the situation over.

"The sooner you begin operations, the better," said Price curtly. "The Governor is coming through here

Illustrated by JOHN COSTIGAN, N.A.

within the week to inspect the Northern Province, and the native chiefs will be full of complaints about these raids."

"He will stay the night here, I suppose?" said Ben.

"Undoubtedly. I shall entertain him at my place."

Ben appeared to be turning this over in his slow mind. "If I start shooting elephants in this forest, there are bound to be some wounded," he opined. "There are a lot of places on the road where cars have to go slow. It wouldn't do for a wounded elephant to come out of the forest and chase the Governor up a tree. Hadn't I better wait a bit?"

This aspect of the matter had not occurred to the Commissioner. At once he was full of concern. "Yes, by Jove, you had! Don't let a thing like that happen, for heaven's sake! They will be here on Wednesday, I think; you had better keep quiet until they have gone. I will explain to His Excellency that we were all ready to start offensive measures, but held back on account of his visit."

"It's up to you," said Ben calmly, and took his departure. He wondered what Sir George Malcolm was like now. Ben had known him during the war; they had both been in the Intelligence Department. At one period Colonel Malcolm had been Ben's superior officer. Times had changed; Sir George was a still greater man now. But war memories were hard to kill.

Ben kept in touch with the elephants in the forest. He shifted his camp there, about a mile from the road. The herd was feeding and watering along another river, high in the lonely hills, but in a few days they turned back toward their favorite waterfall. Ben and Salim, spooring and spying, followed them on the trails they had worn to the breadth and solidity of a car-track. That night they would be bathing in the old spot; the Governor would have dirty water for his morning ablutions.

In the evening Ben sat beside the road and watched two lorries go by. Askari in uniform sat on top of the loads; His Excellency's equipment was preceding him. Half an hour later the first of three big touring-cars appeared.

Ben walked into the middle of the road and stood there, a tattered figure leaning on a rifle. The car pulled up. A military driver frowned at the obstructionist. Ben waved reproof aside and advanced to greet the spare, brown-faced man reclining in the back seat.

"Hello, Sir George."

The Governor sat up straight, tilted his helmet back from his eyes, and regarded, astonished, this bearded highwayman. The A.D.C. beside him changed his splutter into an apologetic cough.

"Who are you?" demanded the autocrat. To his companion he remarked, sarcastically: "Don't choke yourself, Carthew; if you want to laugh, do so."

"I'm Ben Little—Sergeant Ben Little. You and I did a bit of scouting together at times."

Sir George muttered an expletive indicative of surprise and pleasure. He extended his hand. "We certainly did. How are you, Ben? Of course, I remember—you were an African hunter. This is a strange reunion. Get in the car and come on with us. We are staying the night at Leru."

"I wanted you to stay the night with me," said Ben. "My camp is close handy. I've got a cook, although I haven't any beds. Still, you've got rugs and blankets, haven't you? Lying on the ground won't be much hardship for a man like you."

Sir George smiled at the compliment. "I confess I'd like to, Ben, but I must get on. I arranged to stay with the D.C. tonight."

"Send the car on with your excuses," said Ben calmly. "Near here is a fine waterfall where a herd of elephants bathes in the moonlight. I want you to see 'em. I'll wager you'll never see anything like it again." He embarked on a leisurely description of the giants in their playground.

The Governor's eyes glistened. "Sounds wonderful, doesn't it, Carthew? By Jove, I'd like to see that! I have been Governor of this Colony for six months, and I've never yet had time to see the larger fauna."

"Why not do it, sir?" encouraged the A.D.C. eagerly. "There is no real reason why we should sleep at Leru tonight. Price will understand."

The Governor pondered for a moment. "I ought to know things at first hand," he murmured. Then decisively: "Right; we'll do it! Get the kit out of the cars."

He and his aide climbed stiffly out into the road. Carthew summoned natives from the cars behind and gave brisk orders.

Sir George stretched himself. "Lead on, Ben," he said. "It won't be the first time you have taken me into danger of my life. If you get me killed this time, you'll have to answer to His Majesty's Government."

"No risk," said the ranger briefly. "They are well-behaved animals."

Personal servants shouldered blankets and firearms. The cars went on; the little procession started off into the forest. The Governor and the ranger talked busily about old times in Palestine; Carthew walked behind

The land was once theirs to do with as they pleased; they cannot understand that conditions have changed.

his elders, feeling very grown-up as he listened to this chatter.

Late that night, after a good meal eaten beside a blazing fire, Sir George and Carthew followed their guide along narrow trails toward the cliff. Brilliant stars showed through the arching boughs; the way was lit by a waning moon. Strange wild cries came from far off in the hills; near at hand the bushes were full of rustlings. Ben and Salim walked quietly and confidently; the tyros, strung up to a pitch of anticipation, were reassured by the obvious competence of these people to whom the midnight forest was so familiar. It was the Governor's first real adventure since the war days and he was as thrilled as a hunter at his first stalk.

Presently from ahead came high-pitched, ringing sounds, an indescribable hubbub that might have been made by disintegrating machinery.

"The moon is well up and they are making merry," said Ben softly. "Keep close behind me."

He threaded a cautious way among the bushes, and, in a few minutes, brought them to the edge of the cliff, from whence they looked down at the tree-ringed pool.

Huge beasts, shining wet and black, with yellow tusks protruding, splashed and gamboled in the rushing water. Others stood in ranks at the margin, like an audience at a swimming gala. The cascade descended in tons of white foamy water onto the backs of the bathers, who squirted from their raised trunks miniature fountains to glisten in the moonlight. The scene was of absorbing interest to the strangers—the wild creatures unhindered at their nocturnal affairs, unconscious of surveillance. On the bank a young calf insisted on making a late supper, while a fellow butted at him, inciting him to play. Young males engaged in mock combat, wrestling with tusks interlocked. The old bulls patiently waited their turn, testing the wind for danger, seeming to rejoice in the happy pastimes of their charges.

"Those two are the patriarchs," said Ben, his voice deadened by the falling water. "I reckon they're a pair of brothers, sharing the duty of herd bulls as friendly as you please. This is a good lot; I'm willing to bet you could walk in among 'em and never have one make a poke at you. When elephants haven't been harried they are the most amiable of all big game."

Hours passed quickly; the spectators were too enthralled to grow weary. This experience was unique, and might never be repeated. But at last the entertainment ended and the herd moved slowly off into the shadows.

"What will they do now?" inquired Sir George.

"They've gone to raid the native shambas," Ben told him. "Presently you'll hear the uproar as the owners try to chase them off."

"Hum—not so good! That sort of thing has to be stopped."

Ben took out his pipe and settled himself comfortably on a rock. "That's just it. I've been sent here to stop it. My orders are to shoot off this herd—to kill the whole lot of 'em."

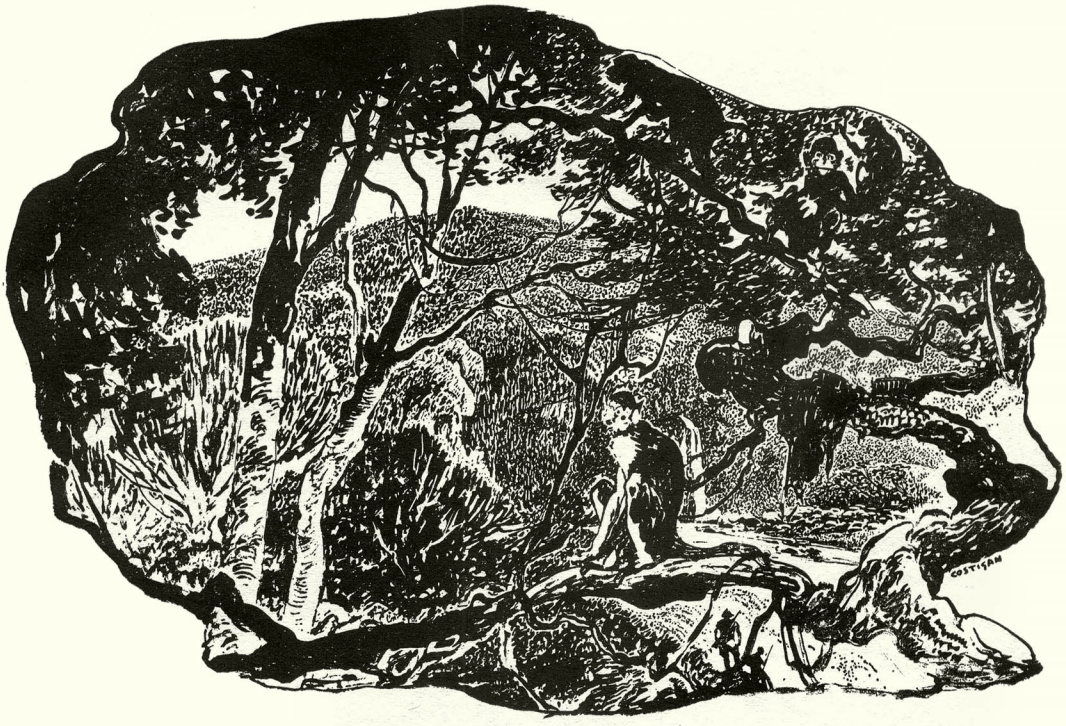
"I say, that's a bit thick!" Carthew protested.

The Governor was silent, accepting the ranger's proffered pouch.

"I don't like the job," Ben explained. "It's different if they start attacking men, but this lot have never hurt anyone."

"Eating the crops which sustain men through the drought months is harm enough," said Sir George.

Ben nodded, puffing smoke. "So I'll just have to go ahead and wipe 'em out; those two old bulls, all those cows and calves. Trouble is coming



to them; they won't bathe in the moonlight under the waterfall any more."

"Damnable!" said the Governor sharply, and his A.D.C. murmured, "Not cricket!" under his breath.

"Sorry," said Ben mildly. "Orders are orders."

"Isn't there any possible way of sparing these animals?" asked Sir George helplessly.

"Well, there is," Ben announced slowly. He pointed with the stem of his pipe. "Ten miles over there is the border of the Eastern Game Reserve. Those hills are deserted; nobody lives in them. If this was made part of the Reserve, those elephants could bathe under the waterfall without hindrance from anyone."

"But the natives' crops? One cannot place the welfare of animals before that of men."

"There are only a few hundreds of them," said Ben. "Their soil is poor and worked out. Offer them some good forest land on the edge of the Chelungu country, and they'll shift so quick you'll lose track of 'em."

The Governor pondered. "It might be done," he said, thinking aloud. "Why hasn't the District Commissioner suggested that solution?"

"I expect he is concerned about his bath-water," said Ben. "You see, the elephants make rather a mess of things. You wouldn't like to bathe in pea soup yourself."

Sir George laughed. "What is your remedy for that?" he asked curiously.

"Well, they could close down the office here. Or they could lay a pipeline from higher up the river."

"The post is necessary; and a pipeline would be expensive. The cost of administration must be considered, you know."

Ben struck another match and applied it carefully to the tobacco. "I could point out," he said between puffs, "that elephants once killed can never be replaced. That's one thing you chaps can't do. Only God can do that. I reckon He wanted 'em, or He wouldn't have worried making 'em." Neither Sir George nor his aide felt any desire to laugh at Ben's theology.

"Yes," said the Governor softly. "God made the elephants to play in the waterfall under the tropical moon." He sighed. "This world is full of beauty we know not of, Carthew. Sometimes I think we are very clumsy, ignorant people, the way we try to rule and construct. Ben, here, is wise; he has been trained in a good school."

"Yes sir. I was thinking his Headmaster and the elephants' are the same."

"Tush!" said Ben. "Always think twice before you break things up. Once you've done it, you can't undo it. It's common sense to be cautious."

The Governor rose. "You are quite right, Ben," he said. "Now we must be getting back. The cars will be here for us at daybreak. It has been a most instructive experience. You will do nothing further until you get orders."

"That suits me," said the ranger, as he led the way on the campward trail. . . .

A month later the newspapers reported:

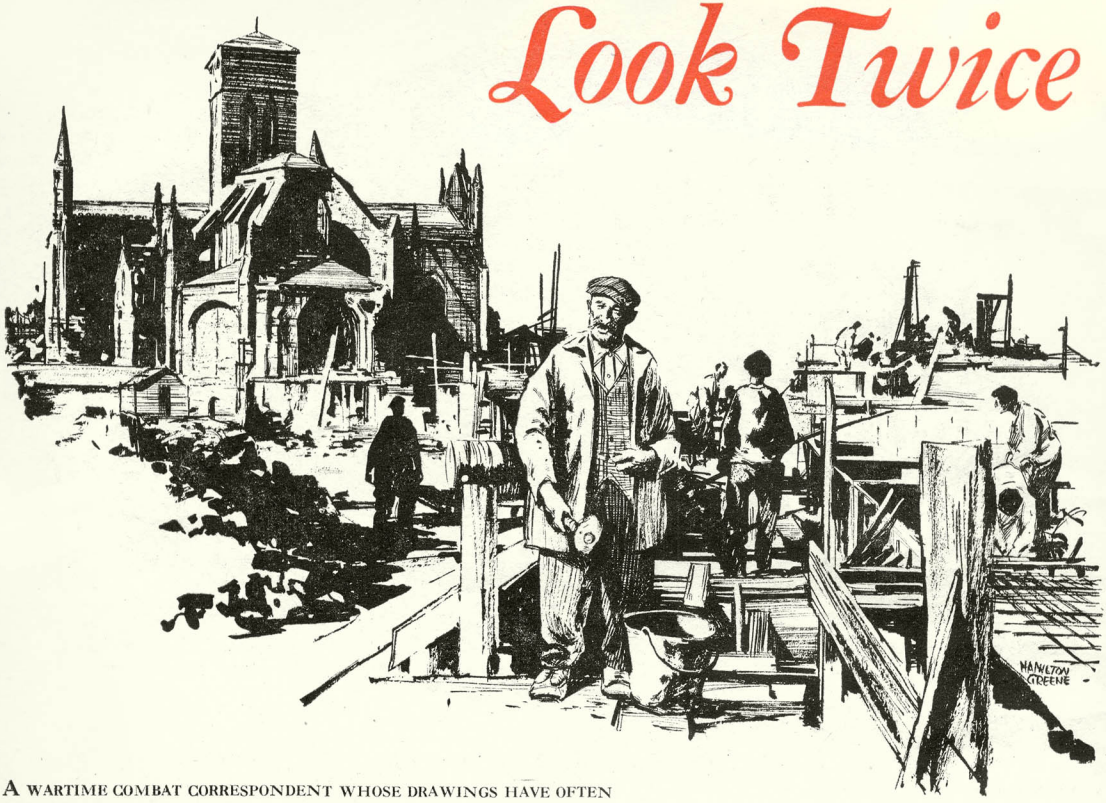
"The Governor in Council has issued a proclamation which includes the Leru country in the Game Reserve. That portion of the Leru tribe occupying this land will be moved to a new location in the Chelungu forest. It is expected that the new bill will be brought before the Legislature at the next session."

Another announcement was that Ben Little had been placed in charge of the new game sanctuary. Ben read the news, seated by his campfire in the mountains.

"That's the best bit of good that came out of the war," he told Salim solemnly. "I ought to take up diplomacy for a profession."

Loud in the still night came the chorus of merriment from the elephants' bathing-pool. Ben listened, a smile on his weatherbeaten face. "You'd better sing soft, my friends," he said. "From now on, I'm boss in these parts, and I won't be kept awake at night."

Look Twice



A WARTIME COMBAT CORRESPONDENT WHOSE DRAWINGS HAVE OFTEN APPEARED IN THESE PAGES CONCLUDES HIS ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF NORMANDY REVISITED IN 1949.

by HAMILTON GREENE

You know, Normandy is a marvelous place to go. It's dairy country, like my own part of Vermont. They have cheeses there that look awful and taste wonderful. They have a local *pâté de la compagnie* that people travel hundreds of miles to eat. I appreciated all this on my recent visit, because when I'd been here last, five years ago, the cheese had been smeared by the ton all over the blasted docks of Cherbourg, and most of the cows were fat balls of gas, upside down and very dead in the hedge-bordered orchards.

In Normandy today, the mind keeps insisting on comparisons. One repeats again and again: "Then—and now. Then—and now." How sordid then—how charming now! How frightening then—how tranquil now! Well, in a sense, that was what I was there for, this time. I expected to see, and in some measure record, the Norman countryside after five years of peace. I traveled, made pictures, enjoyed it. But inevitably the memory of chattering burp gun and acrid cordite would not go away. In consequence I found myself consolidating, re-evaluating, and acquiring depth in the things I knew about battle. My rambles over beachhead, hedgerow and broken town had given me a more realistic appraisal of the muddy man who had held the gun in the summer of 1944. I had seen him everywhere, in retrospect, not as a nameless unit in a great army, but as an individual with a personal war on his hands, and who by mere multiplication had won us a victory.

As I passed through St. Lô, however, and approached Avranches, I found myself thinking of the battle with a somewhat different slant. This was the part of Normandy where the breakout had occurred, precipitating the encirclement and defeat of the German Seventh Army at Falaise Gap. It was a very great victory indeed, and you have probably heard it described as one of the most brilliant combinations of strategy and tactics of any war.

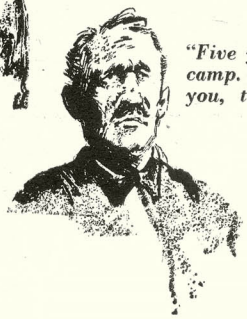
In the code-books it was called Operation Cobra. They have a huge map of this maneuver painted on a billboard near the main square of Avranches; and as you stand before it today, you cannot fail to be impressed by those broad looping arrows indicating with graphic drama the many-pronged drives that accomplished the encirclement. I have heard Operation Cobra claimed at one time or another as the specific brain child of practically every staff officer in the European Theater; but things like that are never the neatly packaged idea of any one war-room. In point of fact, the need for a breakout of some kind had been foreseen, and planned, long before a single soldier set foot in Normandy. When they got around to doing it, however, the Allied tactical position was so much weaker than they expected it would be, and the time so much later, that the original plans meant little. In the end, in execution, it turned out to be a blend of many men's ideas, many men's mistakes, a sort of half-lucky, half-unlucky amalgam of studied forethought and split-second opportunism patient im-

at a Battleground

THESE ARE THE PEOPLE

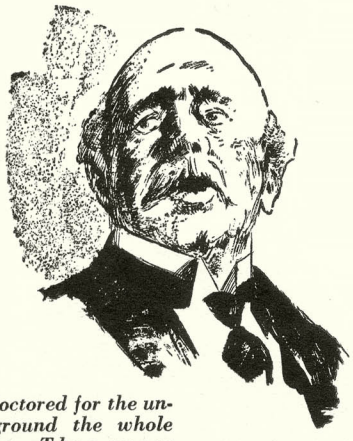
If you want to know about battle, ask the people who lived on the battlefield. They suffered the conquerors with hate, and they suffered the liberators with courage. They needed us badly and they were glad we came. They speak of us not as crusaders, but as men. They understand that victories are won not by heroes but by hard work. In a country where the land rules life, this is something the Normans can well understand.

"The soldiers come and fight and go away, but I've been here since I was born eighty years ago."



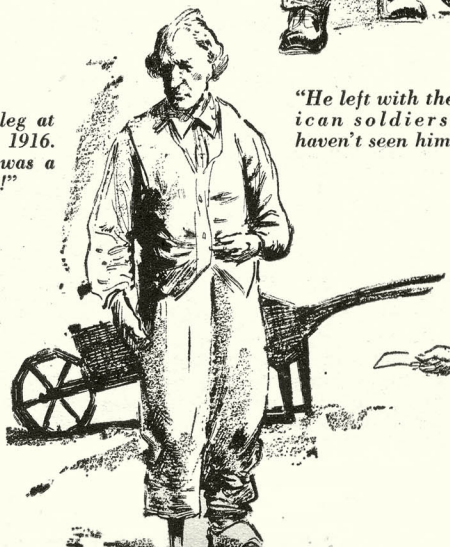
"Five years in a labor camp. . . . Well, I'll tell you, the food wasn't bad."

"A German soldier gave the baby this grenade, but I got it from her just in time. . . ."



"I doctored for the underground the whole time. They never caught me."

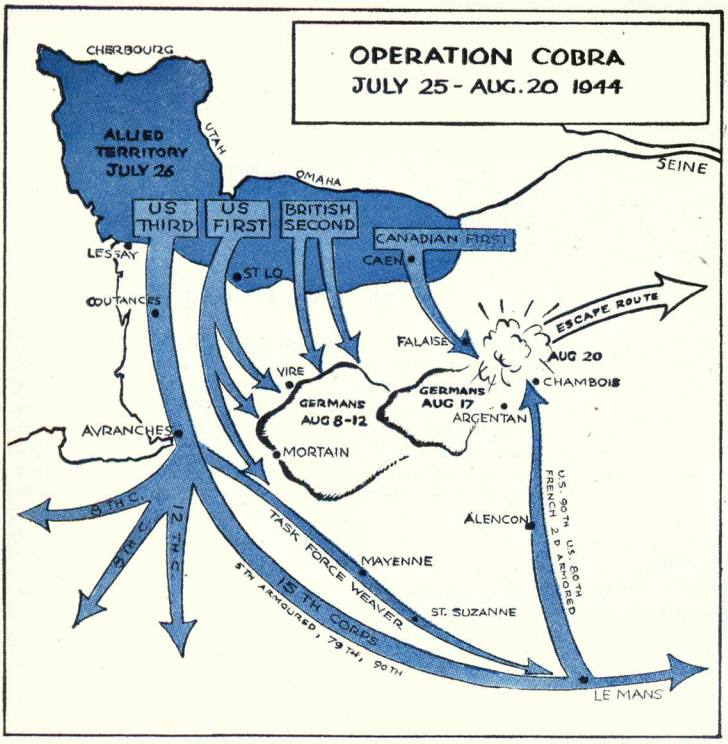
"I lost this leg at Verdun in 1916. Now, there was a real war!"



"He left with the American soldiers and I haven't seen him since."

plementation and hidebound blundering, cautious planning and daring chance-taking. Operation Cobra was "thought up" only in general terms. Specifically, it evolved piecemeal.

It is natural, when we consider the success of the encirclement maneuver, for the emphasis to shift somewhat from the GI point of view to the command point of view. This may not be a popular notion with the 1st or 30th Divisions, who had to fight like



Breakout and encirclement.

maniacs at Mortain and thereafter, as they shoved the Germans eastward toward their destruction at Chambois. Nor will it be popular with Crerar's Canadians, who closed the trap from the north, but in so doing were slaughtered all the way from Caen to Falaise. There was GI fighting and GI dying, but the strategic success of the battle depended on the rapid movement of Patton's spearheads, and in a war of movement, the faster you move, the better the GI likes it. On the other hand, this is the time when the Command with their maps and overlays have to work like hell.

Actually, our high command team was pretty good. To win the battle of Normandy, it took the peculiar talents of all of them. It took a Montgomery who always seemed overcautious when British troops were committed, but who admittedly knew the German military mind better than most. It took a Patton dashing all over the front waving those pistols, but shrewdly exploiting his armored spearheads while bellowing four-lettered invective at restraint and delay. It took a Hodges, stable as a blockhouse. It took an unruffled Bradley, who could work like a horse with his eyes seven places at once. And it took Ike himself. He had smart Walter Smith beside him, of course, but he himself had his back in Washington, one foot in Churchill's lap and the other foot in Normandy, where the blood exploded in his face.

Command is not only a question of telling some other guy to die. Anyone who has ever been in a war-room and seen the sweat of worry on the faces of men bending over the confusing phase-lines of an acetate overlay, while signal men or liaison officers shift colored markers backward or forward, knows this very well. Here again, war is a matter of the individual. He has a wife and kids. He has courage or he hasn't. He's a stuffed shirt or he isn't. Like the GI, he is an individual with a personal war; but here the individual has brass on his collar.

THE story of the breakout has been told many times, from various points of view, but it won't hurt to summarize briefly its broad development. Designed primarily to get us loose from the matted roots and briers of the hedgerows, it began, chronologically, with the historic two-day air assault on St. Lô. It started a week late because of weather, but when the show opened on July 25th, it involved the use of about three thousand planes; heavies, mediums and fighters. The combined tonnage from his unprecedented air armada killed numerous men in the 9th and 30th Divisions, and it killed Lt. Gen. Leslie McNair. But it also killed some thousands of Germans, while paralyzing other thousands into imbecility. The Germans who weren't paralyzed got the hell out of there.

ON the second day of the attack I happened to be in a B-26 (piloted by Stewart Hatch, son of New Mexico's Senator), and I will never forget that carpet of roiling smoke through which we dumped a ton and a half of antipersonnel fragmentation bombs on the German lines south of the city. I have seen plenty of saturation bombing, before and since, but I never saw anything like that deal. The same day, Bradley punched Hodges' First Army down into the hole through St. Lô toward Coutances, Villedieu and Avranches. Then, when Avranches fell on the 31st, First Army swung due east to hold the left flank, for at this moment George Patton entered the play. His newly arrived Third Army had been assembling all month behind the lines on the Cherbourg Peninsula. With the breakout operation well under way, Patton set his armored columns in motion. It was nervy tactics, for the seacoast was on their right. Nevertheless, they roared from Lessay down through Coutances to Avranches, where they burst out into the clear. The Eighth Corps, borrowed from First Army swung west into Brittany. The Twelfth Corps drove south to establish a line along the Loire. The Twentieth Corps made a wide end run toward Chartres, while the Fifteenth Corps swung east in a tight encircling arc, destined to be the principal flanking threat to the badly disrupted German Seventh Army, under Gunther von Kluge.

For the fast-moving armored spearheads of those Third Army columns, (such as 5th Armored, for example) Operation Cobra at this point became a wildly exhilarating carnival, complete, as you probably remember, with cheering Frenchmen, tossed apples and flowers, smiling girls, cider and cognac, with occasional excitement afforded by diehard SS snipers in church towers—or, for contrast, the grim public haircuts given the *collaborateurs*.

But for the First Army's Fifth, Seventh and Nineteenth, Operation Cobra was something else again. Von Kluge had started a tremendous counter-offensive on August 7th; and for five bitter days he tried vainly to cut the American supply lines by driving west from Mortain toward Avranches. By the time he realized that he couldn't budge Hodges at Mortain, the Fifteenth Corps' Task Force Weaver had swept through Mayenne to Le Mans. This point was not only well to von Kluge's rear, but was his prin-

Old town wall in St. Suzanne.

cipal supply depot as well. On August 12th, von Kluge realized he had made a bad gamble. Relieved of command, he committed suicide while his army pulled out of the line and belatedly made a run for Germany along an escape route through Argentan. For many of them, it was far too late.

Our brass tried their best to capitalize on von Kluge's delay, but control of the mechanics sort of got away from them. They might have bagged the entire German army here, it must be confessed, but they more or less dropped the ball. Patton had created a provisional Corps under his assistant Hugh Gaffey, whom he sent north from Le Mans with orders not to stop until they made definite physical contact with the British and Canadians, slugging painfully southward toward Falaise. The 80th and 90th Divisions and LeClerc's Second Armored accordingly started northward in a mad dash to seal off the Seventh Army's escape route. There has been a lot of argument about who stymied whom at this point; but for one reason or another the provisional Corps was stopped on order. There were a few days of fumbling, during which many of von Kluge's best Panzer outfits and SS units made good their escape. However, by the 18th of August, the escape route had been pinched into a narrow corridor at Chambois, only a mile and a half wide. British and American artillery teams, emplaced on both sides of this valley, poured round after round into the fleeing German columns. Again there were occasional hard-to-understand stop-fire orders, ostensibly designed to prevent an American-British artillery duel, and still more Germans got away.

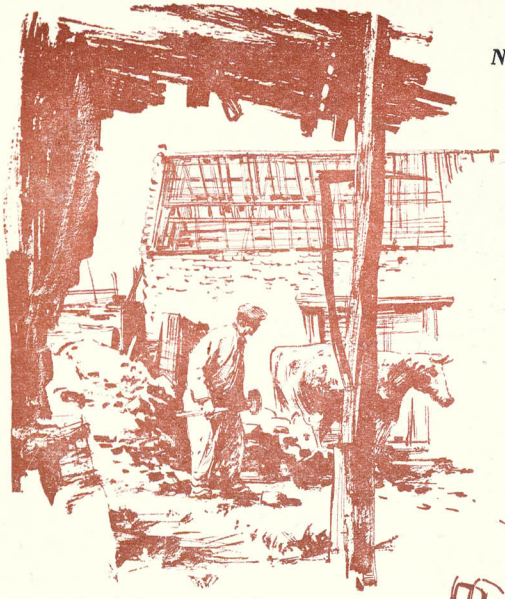
But in the end, after the Gap had been closed on August 20th by a juncture of the 90th Division and a stray division of Poles attached to the Canadian army, it was found that the Germans had suffered appalling losses from both artillery fire and strafing Allied fighter planes. More than ten German divisions had been completely destroyed. We may have lost a chance to win the war; nevertheless it was one wham-dilly of a victory as far as Normandy was concerned.

In the course of traveling through Normandy I followed most of the principal routes taken by the encircling American and Canadian columns. A map put out by Michelin (No. 102) called *"Batallie de Normandie"* makes the following of these routes very simple—and very interesting as well, for they have marked each town with dates and symbols which not only indicate the increasing tempo of the liberation, but show what evidences of war may be found there today.

As I traveled, it was possible to recapture something of the spirit of what it had been like five years ago. Even in areas where I hadn't been myself during the battle, the remaining evidence could easily put my imagination to work. And as I passed through the towns through which the First Army troops had battered eastward from Mortain, shoving the Jerries up through ruined Vire and Argentan, I thought more than once of Captain John Beach and *Lieutenant Joe Herrick* (Forrest Shugart), whose stories I have illustrated this past year in Blue Book. Their outfits were involved in this territory, and in a few places I could identify the exact battle lines of certain actions described in their vivid accounts. (*Normandy Break-through*, by C. Donald Wire and Forrest Shugart, Blue Book, July '49; and *Dagwood Red Charlie—One*, by Captain John Blair Beach, Blue Book, October, '48).

The few square miles around the area of Chambois itself is still pretty much of a junk-yard. There are several large fields on which have been dragged the remnants of practically every variety of armor in the recognition manual. I had a good chance here to fill out my files of dimly remembered equipment. There were those damn' Minenwerfer multiple

Norman ingenuity.



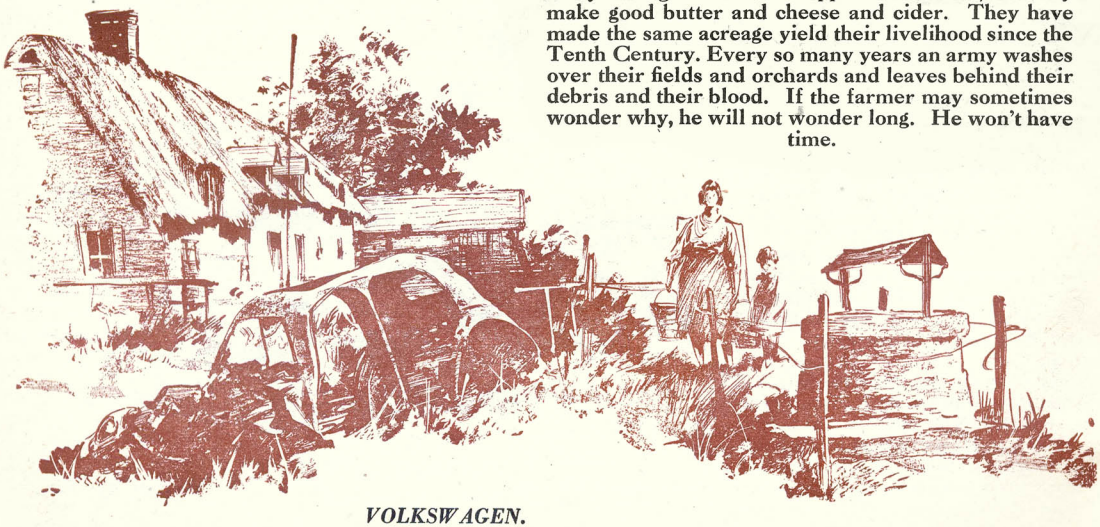
New barn going up at Colleville.

REHEARSAL?

Normans are like Vermonters.

THESE ARE THE FARMS

They raise good cows and apples and horses, and they make good butter and cheese and cider. They have made the same acreage yield their livelihood since the Tenth Century. Every so many years an army washes over their fields and orchards and leaves behind their debris and their blood. If the farmer may sometimes wonder why, he will not wonder long. He won't have time.



VOLKSWAGEN.

rocket-carriers, self-propelled cannon of all sizes, and just about every tank they ever built. Some have been partly cut down with a torch, presumably for scrap. I was amused to come across one tank turret, upside down in the grass, with the still-legible warning printed in German on its complicated control panel: *"Read instructions before operating."* There are other fields near Chambois, where they have evidently just bulldozed into bomb craters ton upon ton of twisted, rusting equipment. The helmets of both armies, some riddled with fragmentation, are scattered through the débris. Lizards live in many of them, and there was a skull in one of them. There were shells, too, in this junk, some apparently unexploded, and belts of live MG ammunition, some of it with those black wooden noses the Germans used at times.

One bomb crater, thus filled with junk, had five white crosses without insignia planted around its perimeter, presumably casualties from that single explosion. One looks at them with a certain reflection. Reflection of this kind, as everywhere else in Normandy, jostles one loose from contemplation of the grand strategic result—and brings one back to an ultimate realization of war in terms of human life. But what a variety of human life! Life is life to the infantryman, bewildered and alone. And it is no less to the captain, worrying his men toward an objective—or to the general, sick with fear that his last guess may have been a bad one—or to the war correspondent, straining to make sense out of confusion. And, of course, any one of those crosses could mark the spot where life had gone from an unidentified Frenchman. Which brings us, finally, to the Normans themselves. It was their war too, and many of them paid plenty for their liberation.

Most of us never had much thought about the French while we busied ourselves with the Germans. They often seemed slightly ridiculous as they got

The ubiquitous jeep is still in Normandy.

Steel scrap makes good fence.

First responsibility is to the land.

in our way, squawked about damage, or insisted on crossing the battle lines to milk the cows. But, as with many other aspects of the great adventure, a second look at the Norman peasant is revealing.

Actually, the French of Normandy have always seemed likable to me, probably because they are farming people, and it occurs to mind that they would very likely have more in common with my own neighbors in Vermont than with men of their own language living in Paris. I suppose that rural people are much the same the world over. If they seem surly, they are probably shy. The uncertain nature of their livelihood has bred in them a direct responsibility to the land. The Norman pushes his plow around a big King Tiger tank left in his fields with the same detached patience with which my neighbors bypass an outcropping ledge of granite.

They have of course made practical salvage of everything portable that both armies left behind. I have seen dozens of those steel landing-mat sections hooked together to make fence. At St. Lambert sûr Dives, a GI helmet is in use as a hanging flower pot along the roadside. Broken windows are still in temporary repair with parts of cardboard cartons, on which are visible familiar legends such as Ball Ammo 50 Caliber or perhaps Ten in One. At Coulouvray-Boisbenatre, they have knocked together into running repair a Mark IV tank and rigged it with a hoist, for hauling away the heavy war débris left in the fields of the villagers. The job not only looked pretty much the way our own blacksmith would have done it, but the community owns the equipment, just as ours probably would.

They have put plenty of jeeps back in service, without bothering to remove either the division marking or repair the bullet holes. And just as my neighbors would have done, they have thought up more ways to use empty telephone wire reels, and shell casings, than you would think possible. One junk dealer at Argentan has collected for sale a yard full of belly-tanks jettisoned from fighter planes. Now, what would you do with a belly-tank?

In addition to this general similarity of practical approach, what was further evident whenever I talked to any of them were the specific variations in point of view which one is apt to find in any rural community. They spoke of losing their barns or houses, usually from an unavoidable bombardment or bombing; but sometimes, unfortunately, when it was not strictly necessary. Well—war is full of snafus. But if one farmer seemed a little ironically amused by it all, I could think: "He sounds just like Arthur so-and-so, down our road." And if another man seemed pretty bitter about the injustice, I could identify his reaction as similar in viewpoint with the characteristic responses of certain of my own neighbors.

By and large, the Norman today seems to reflect more hard-headed realism about the war than I would have thought. Before I went over to Normandy I heard a silly French girl, living here in the United States, tell me that the whole American effort was unnecessary, and that Jacques le Clerc had liberated France practically

single-handed, anyhow. I was afraid I'd hear a lot of this kind of chauvinistic nonsense once I got to Normandy, but that wasn't the case. The French know what we did. And they appraise our effort realistically, without unnecessary bombast about their own part in it.

People are, after all, people. And the French sense this better than some. They do not think of us sentimentally as so many warriors in shining armor, but rather as a bunch of guys, good, bad and indifferent, with widely varying manners and with differing degrees of devotion to duty. Inevitably there are many Normans who were glad to see us come, and many others who were glad to see us go.

I remember my sense of complete understanding with the hotelkeeper in Mayenne, who told me about the time the American troops liberated his town. There had been one GI who was very plastered, and who had barged into the hotel and stuck a gun in his face, demanding "cognac" and "*femmes!*" The hotelkeeper had sensibly kept his hands up, but with a rare blend of tact and courage had bluffed the GI into getting out of the hotel. In telling the story, the hotel man was merely retailing a sordid anecdote to one whom he felt had a sympathetic ear. There was no implication in his manner that he was accusing one American about another American. He was simply a man telling another man about another man of bad behavior. We can't escape it. Wars are fought by men—but there are men of all kinds.

The hotelkeeper, like so many others with whom I talked, reminded me of how easy it is to disregard the larger issues of warfare and think of it only in terms of personal experience. A battle may have far-reaching results, but the GI thinks of it only as his own fragment of beachhead or pillbox, and the signal officer thinks of it only as so many miles of open

Belly-tanks at Alençon.

Chambois junkyard.

circuit—or the time he got crocked in Fontainebleu. So it is with the Norman. The war he thinks of was his own.

I found this out in particular as I poked about the area where Task Force Weaver and his deputy Colonel Barth, had made the four-day jump from St. Hilaire to Le Mans. We have touched on the importance of this drive before, for it will remain in history as one of those rare flash campaigns that illuminate a war, like the exploits of a Jeb Stuart or a Light Horse Harry Lee.

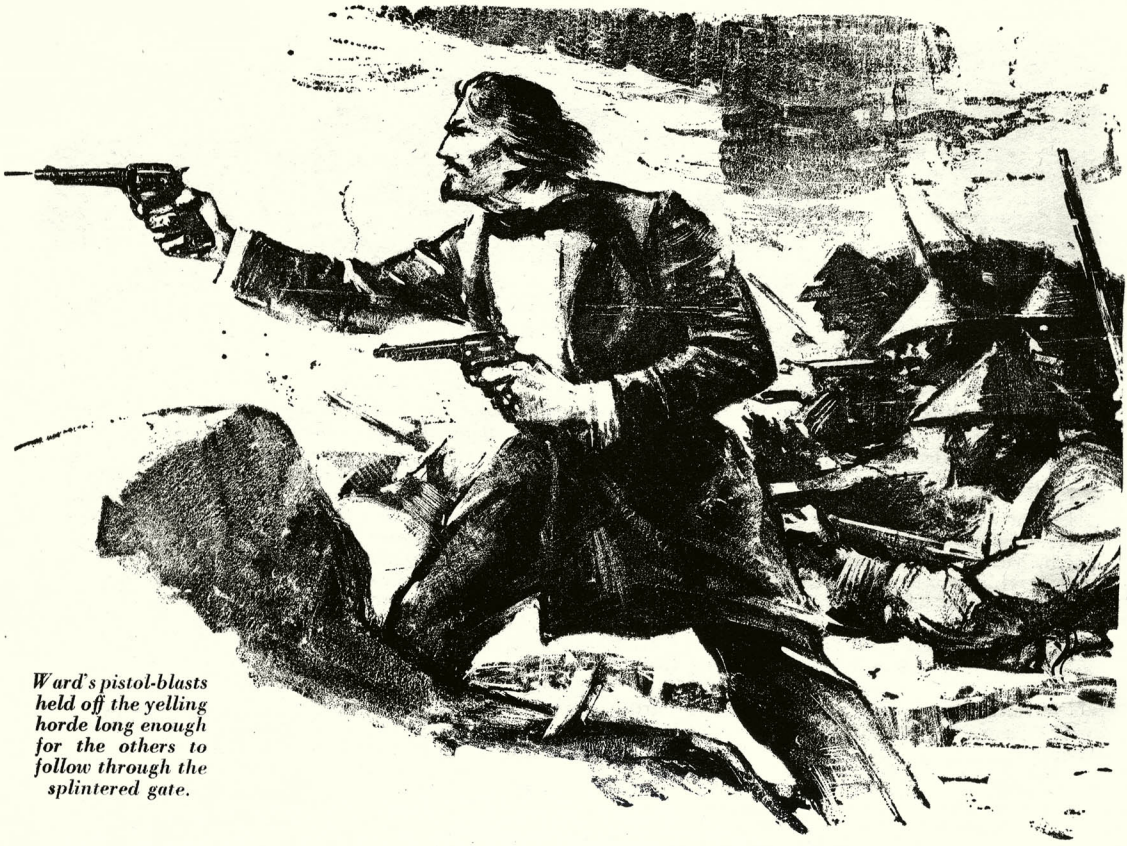
The people of Le Mans remember Weaver's entry, all right. They remember their liberation—and the date. But they don't remember it because it represented the catastrophic outflanking of the German Army, days ahead of schedule. They remember it because on that day their local *maquis,* under the leadership of the parish priest, saved the main highway bridge from demolition. The Germans had the bridge planted with aërial bombs, all wired to blow. But one of the *maquis,* a twelve-year-old boy, offered the German sentry a cigarette, and held a match for him to light it. As the sentry bent over the match, the other guys in the group knocked him over the head, and defused the bombs. War here was definitely not Patton's strategy or Weaver's tactics. It was the war of their parish priest, and a courageous twelve-year-old.

The farmer at Les Maisons Rouge remembers how Barth and Weaver caught the German artillery column between them and reduced it to smoking scrap; but he remembers most of all the shell from one of Barth's 155s that dropped on his own garage. The skeleton of the automobile still lies in the pile of rubble near the crossroads, but this summer he has started to build a new garage. Mademoiselle Fougère also remembers Weaver's liberating Americans, but with a somewhat different light in her eyes. Did I chance to know the sergeant called Johnny from the province of where-was-it? He was tall—like me—and dark. But apparently there the resemblance ended.

St. Suzanne is very typical of all those outlying towns which were delivered in one brief moment of violence, during Patton's war of movement. Quite a lot went on when Colonel Barth took part of Weaver's Task Force through it. I was sure that the citizens who lived there could never think back without remembering vividly the very fancy tank work of Major Hamilton, and the very fancy artillery work of Colonel Norris, that saved Barth's spearhead from annihilation. But St. Suzanne had lived with Germans for four years, whereas our troops had touched them for hardly twenty-four hours. That one day of action lives in their memories as nothing, compared to the anxious weeks in which they hid and doctored a downed American fighter pilot, finally getting him properly disguised and bicycled and off to the Spanish border. Ask those people today about their liberation, and they speak chiefly of the time when William Black, having rejoined his squadron, flew back to St. Suzanne and put on an air show over their village. Barth? Oh, yes. But William Black! "Ah, monsieur, *formidable!*"

If St. Suzanne is interesting because of the typical variance in post-war viewpoint between liberating troops and liberated townfolk, it is also interesting as a place of great antiquity. Because of this, you sense somehow that all the conflicting factors of warfare are merely repetitions from other wars in other times. When you climb the crumbling medieval wall that overlooks the town, you stand on the very spot where one of Barth's men got picked off by a German sniper. He could easily have been killed exactly where some other lonely foot-soldier had been drilled by an arrow in the Hundred Years' War. But I doubt the typical soldier-emotions of fear, fatigue and confusion have changed much in the past five hundred years. Even the helmets wouldn't look much different; and certainly one man was as dead as the other. Back in the Eleventh Century, William the Conqueror stormed this medieval bastion unsuccessfully for three years. Did he feel any less frustration than the German commander who failed to throw Barth out on the morning of August 7, 1944? I doubt it.

As I've said, Normandy is a wonderful place for a trip. It was sunny and pleasant, and there was plenty to draw and plenty to think about. I had learned much about soldiering simply by being there—although the soldiers had been long gone—and I had learned much about a people whose country has been a battlefield. But I will always remember the Frenchman in a rebuilding crew at Falaise who reflected perhaps the most pertinent viewpoint of all. He remembered the occupation, and he remembered the invasion, and he remembered the liberation; but he spoke of it only briefly—and with detachment. He stood with a stone hammer in his hands, politely waiting for me to go away. For, in a sense, his war has not stopped at all. He has houses to rebuild. His war is now.



Ward's pistol-blasts held off the yelling horde long enough for the others to follow through the splintered gate.

Chinese Yankee

SHANGHAI was a city of terror when Frederick Townsend Ward came there late in 1859 with a sword for sale.

The virtually untried sword of this American soldier of fortune gave little reassurance to a city whose capture by the Taipings seemed imminent. Everyone in Shanghai knew what would be the city's fate if it fell to the zealots who had conquered fifteen Chinese provinces and drenched the land in blood in a war which had already dragged on for nearly ten years. Beginning in the quasi-Christian reveries of a scholar-prophet, the Taiping movement had gradually become a revolt in arms, then a scourge which had choked China's rivers with dead, and brought fire, looting and slaughter to city after city. The troops of the degenerate Manchu Empire had lost battle after battle until they scarcely fought back at all. Now Shanghai itself, richest prize of China, was ringed about with Taiping armies.

There were few indeed in Shanghai who knew or cared about Ward. Captains on the waterfront remembered him as the resolute mate of the *Westward Ho* who had forced his men to lay aloft and take in sail before a typhoon by threatening to blow the whole ship to bits, flourishing a torch above open powder kegs. Not even all of these knew that he had been a drillmaster with the filibuster William Walker in Nicaragua and Honduras. Salem-born, bred to a life at sea, Ward nevertheless wanted to be a soldier.

His Yankee wit quickly sized up the situation in Shanghai: The Taipings, to whom he had thought of offering his services, didn't need him. The Imperial forces were too disorganized to count. But the Chinese merchants of Shanghai, shuddering at the prospect of falling into the hands of the Taipings, were ready to hire defenses of their own. Ward sought out Yang Tse-tang, or "Taki," one of the wealthiest local bankers. To Taki he made the cool proposal that he would raise a force of his own and with it he would undertake to capture Taiping towns on a piecework basis—$45,000 for villages, up to $135,000 for larger towns. The British and French officers in command of foreign garrisons in Shanghai sneered when they heard of this bizarre offer. But the desperate Taki hired the sword which Ward held out to him. . . .

Some three weeks later the remnant of a hundred mercenaries recruited by Ward dragged themselves

Frederick Townsend Ward was one of the first Caucasians to believe the Chinese would make good soldiers. During the Taiping rebellion he gave up his life in this belief—and blazed the trail followed by the Briton known as "Chinese" Gordon.

by WILLIS THORNTON

Illustrated by Raymond Thayer

back into Shanghai, bloody and beaten. The sneers of the foreign officers turned to laughter when the facts were learned, laughter nervously echoed throughout Shanghai. Ward had had the effrontery to take a hundred ragamuffins, swept up from the rag-tag and bobtail of the waterfront, and march them out to attack Sungkiang, a town some eighteen miles south of Shanghai. Of course they had been soundly whipped. Any competent military man could have told you what would happen! An amateur soldier without standing! The cheeky fellow had got what he deserved!

But Frederick Townsend Ward did not laugh. He was thinking hard as he trudged through the dust at the head of his ragamuffins. Yes, it had been a failure, a bloody failure. He had had only three weeks to drill them; there was no discipline. The ruffians had spent the night boozing beneath the walls of Sungkiang, thoroughly alarming the Taiping garrison, so that their morning assault was greeted by a lethal repulse. Yet his hundred had failed only where all the vast Imperial armies had already failed.

Ward was not discouraged. He had seen what he had seen. Edward Forester, old comrade of soldier-of-fortune adventures in Central America, had proved true and able. Henry Andrea Burgevine, son of a Napoleonic refugee, had performed as well as he talked. And Vicente Macanaya, the Filipino recruit from Manila, had fought like a bee-stung bobcat; good soldier-stuff there! Ward hastened to reassure Taki, then turned immediately to reorganizing and building up his shattered force. On July 16, 1860, he was ready to try again.

With several hundred men this time, and two old brass cannon, Ward returned to Sungkiang. No boozing this time, no laxity. The old cannon were snaked up to the walls, and they proved good enough to blast down the gates. When the smoke and dust cleared, Ward crept forward, but found to his chagrin that there was still another gate within the wall.

With the grim prospect of a second failure staring him in the face, Ward acted immediately. Taking Macanaya and several others, he made a quick rush under heavy fire, and while desperate Taipings poured down a rain of bullets and stinkpots from the walls, he hastily tamped several bags of powder at the base of the inner gate. The quick fuse spluttered. Smoke and dust again filled the air. The big wooden gate seemed intact. But no! There at the bottom Ward saw a piece splintered out.

Instantly he was worming his way through, two big pistols in his hands ahead of him. Their blasts held off a yelling horde long enough for Macanaya to follow, and then the others, one by one. A mad frenzy of hand-to-hand fighting followed. Cutting, slashing, pistoling men at arm's-length, Ward's followers gradually forced their way up the ramp to the wall's top, where the Taiping artillery crowned the gate. For two hours they fought like beasts, clawing and cursing. Then they won the gun-platform, and exhausted, turned the guns around to bear on the city's streets.

All night long the desperately weary men defended the gate against wild counter-attacks. When morning came, the Imperialist Manchu troops poured through the gate they had held open. Sungkiang had fallen, though nearly ninety per cent of Ward's men were either dead or wounded.

There in the captured city Ward set up headquarters and began to build an army, using the money paid him as agreed for the taking of Sungkiang. Soon he was ready for another sally, and twice he led his force against Tsingpu. Those who saw Frederick Townsend Ward in this second assault never forgot him—his pistols discarded now for a light rattan stick, his long black hair flying like the tails of the long blue Prince Albert coat which bore no military insignia of any kind. Walking calmly in the midst of the heaviest fire, Ward needed no insignia to proclaim him both a soldier and a commander of soldiers. Four times he was lightly wounded before a fifth shot passed entirely through his jaw and cheek. Unable to speak, he wrote his orders lying on the litter on which they carried him from the field. He was almost captured just before the litter reached Sungkiang, but he escaped to direct a successful defense. . . .

The jaw wound was not merely disfiguring; it interfered with speech. So Ward made a quick trip to Paris, where expert surgery removed several lead slugs from various parts of his body and restored his speech, though it was never again perfect. As Ward returned to China in the spring of 1861, he was afire with a big new idea: What he had seen convinced

him that the Chinese, once trained and equipped in Western manner, would be excellent soldiers. Ward determined to train a Chinese force.

His increasing standing with the Imperial government, and his practice of recruiting deserters from the British Navy, had irritated Admiral Hope, the ranking British officer on the station. So on May 19, 1861, he had Ward arrested. Ward claimed Chinese citizenship, but Hope had him locked up in a cabin of his flagship, the *Chesapeake*. He allowed one of Ward's lieutenants to visit the prisoner, however. The two put their heads together, then synchronized their watches most carefully.

At precisely two o'clock that morning Ward flung himself through the glass window of his cabin into the dark waters of the Yangtze. The Marine sentry had no chance to do more than shout a startled "Man overboard!" A torch flared on the river, and Ward's companions, waiting in a sampan, pulled their leader out of the muddy water. While the *Chesapeake* was still frantically lowering boats, they escaped in the confusion of the crowded river. . . .

The Taipings were again on the offensive, and the European powers were beginning to swing from neutrality in the Chinese strife toward an active anti-Taiping policy. Ward and Hope were readily reconciled, and plans were made for coöperation between Ward's new Chinese force and the European troops of Britain and France.

By autumn of 1861 Ward had more than a thousand Chinese troops gathered around a nucleus of two hundred Filipinos. America, locked in Civil War, paid no heed to its lone soldier of fortune. Ward offered ten thousand taels to Anson Burlingame, the American Minister, as his contribution to the Union cause; but he had one man's share of war on his own hands, and Washington seemed farther from Shanghai than it does today. Furthermore, Ward had formally taken Chinese citizenship, and had married Chang Mei, daughter of Taki, his banker-sponsor. There were elaborate wedding ceremonies lasting several days, with Ward in mandarin garb. Almost immediately afterward he left to join his troops in the field.

At Kwanfuling, west of Shanghai, he led his Chinese troops in their first severe test. There, while Ward calmly waved his rattan stick in one hand and a long cheroot in the other, they dislodged several times their number of entrenched Taipings. Ward's reputation, and that of his newly trained Chinese troops, were secure.

EARLY in 1862 there began a concerted campaign to clear an area within thirty miles of Shanghai, and Ward's Chinese were in the van of every attack. After the taking of Hsiaotang, Ward was given the title of General and made a mandarin of the fourth class, with its privilege of wearing the coveted blue button on his Chinese head-dress. The Chinese force he had created and led was officially designated Chang-sheng-chun, or Ever Victorious Army.

Victory followed victory, and Ward's force had now grown to a well-equipped and thoroughly trained army of five thousand men. Coördinating his efforts with the plans of Li Hung Chang, then the provincial governor, Ward marched in August to the relief of Ningpo, a city threatened with recapture by the Taipings.

Perhaps he had begun to absorb a little of the prevalent Chinese belief that no bullet could kill him. In any event, Ward exposed himself recklessly before the walls of Tseki, discussing with Forester his plan for an assault to clear this bastion of Ningpo. The firing was heavy, but Ward was as cool and nonchalant as ever, gesturing and pointing with his rattan stick. Suddenly he clapped his hand to his abdomen and said to Forester: "I've been hit!" The stick dropped to the ground.

A litter was brought up to carry Ward from the field. As it jolted away out of the zone of fire, a storming-party passed on its way up to the assault. Ward raised himself painfully and signaled to the commander. "You must do it with a rush," he said. "They are very numerous." He fell back on the litter. The storming-party went on to success.

The first examination showed that Ward's wound was mortal. Nothing could be done but to make him comfortable and to wait. And in a British mission-house at Ningpo they waited until he died on the morning of September 22, 1862. He was thirty-seven years old.

Forester was unwilling, and Burgevine was unable, to fill Ward's shoes as commander of the Ever Victorious Army. So Li Hung Chang appealed to the British for an officer to take over the command. He was given Charles George Gordon, who built well on the foundations Ward had laid, and won an immortal name as "Chinese Gordon." Yet even Gordon's biographer, Dr. Andrew Wilson, paid his tribute to Ward:

> So passed away a man who, as the originator of the idea of disciplining the Chinese, had done good service. Surmounting all difficulties, Ward had gained a strange ascendancy over Europeans as well as Chinese, by his cool and daring courage. Ever foremost in fight, he was honorably scarred; but his ambition was boundless.

It is possible. No one will ever know what ambitions surged within this imperious man. Some thought he even aspired to set up a separate state within China, with himself as its head. His relics and Chinese gear, proudly shown at the Essex Museum at Salem, are silent.

But the Chinese did not forget. In 1877 a temple at Sungkiang was dedicated to his memory by Li Hung Chang for the Dowager Empress. There was graven in blue and gold the inscription:

> A WONDERFUL HERO FROM BEYOND THE SEAS, THE FAME OF WHOSE DESERVING LOYALTY REACHES AROUND THE WORLD, HAS SPRINKLED CHINA WITH HIS AZURE BLOOD. A HAPPY SEAT AMONG THE CLOUDS AND TEMPLES STANDING FOR A THOUSAND SPRINGS MAKE KNOWN TO ALL HIS FAITHFUL HEART.

SPORT SPURTS

IT takes more technicians to televise a football game than there are players on the field.

° ° °

John Nabors, pitcher for the 1916 Philadelphia Athletics, lost nineteen games in a row.

° ° °

Dizzy Dean, in 1934, was the last major-league pitcher to win as many as thirty games in a season.

° ° °

Charles (Red) Ruffing leads all pitchers in World's Series wins—seven.

° ° °

Babe Ruth never let the fact worry him that he struck out more times—1330—than any other player in history.

Municipal Stadium in Philadelphia, with a maximum capacity of 127,000, is the largest in the country; next is Los Angeles Memorial with 103,500 and Soldier Field, Chicago, with 101,180.

° ° °

Up until 1880, a pitcher could give a batter nine balls before he walked. Present change, four, was made in 1889. In 1881 the distance from the pitching mound to home plate was lengthened to fifty feet.

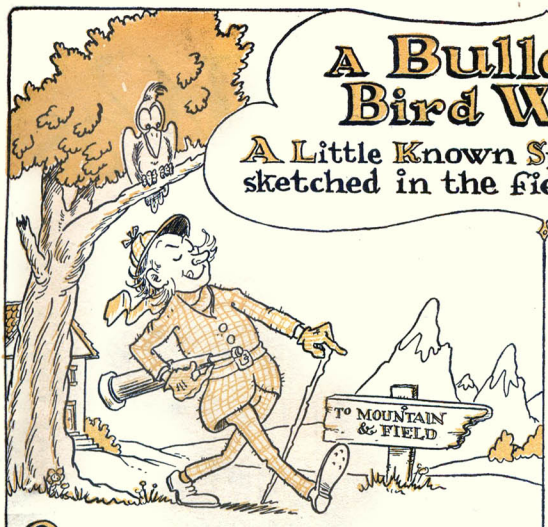
° ° °

Actor Sonny Tufts, in making a football picture, wore No. 44 on his jersey for sentimental reasons—that was the number he wore as a first-string end for Yale.

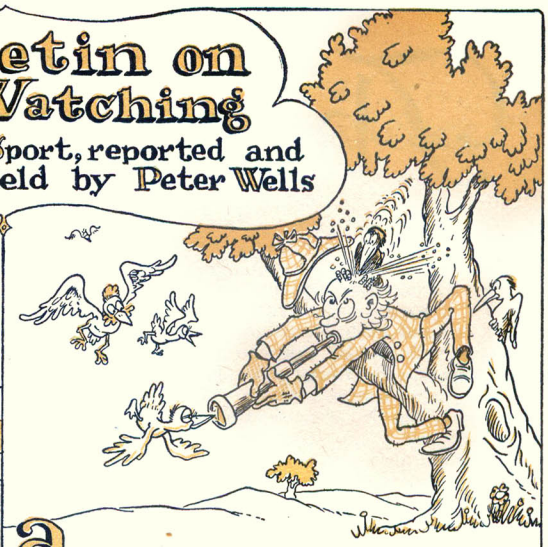
—by Harold Helfer

A Bulletin on Bird Watching

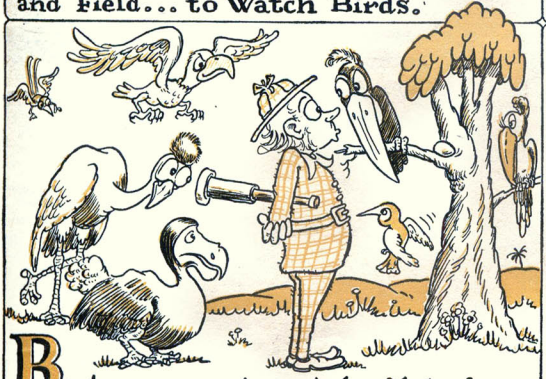
A Little Known Sport, reported and sketched in the field by Peter Wells



Fortified with a good breakfast of birdseed and well bundled up, Bertram used to take off daily for mountain and field... to Watch Birds.

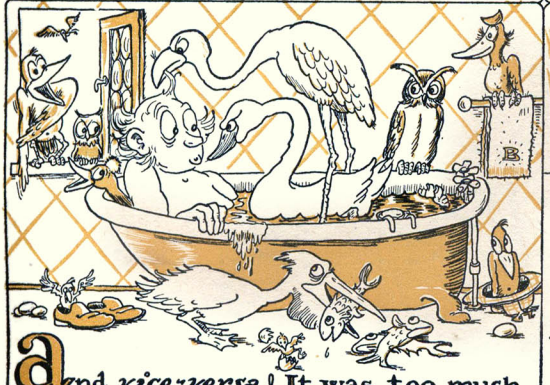


Although not exactly fiercely competitive, Bird Watching was quite satisfying to Bertram. It had it's drawbacks - but Bertram kept prying.



Bertram even traveled widely in foreign lands - to Watch Birds. Vultures, Toucans, Emus -- he watched more darn birds! The only trouble was ...

the birds became interested in watching *Bertram!* At first he was overjoyed. He was the world's foremost Bird Watcher...



and *vice-versa*! It was too much of a good thing. For some time now, Bertram has been trying to *un*watch Birds... with very little luck...

Bertram is now a "spelunker:" he Explores Caves for his Hobby. He never even *glances* at the bats... One can't be too careful, you know.....

There Once Was

"THERE were fifty boys from the city," my father shouted; "and probably a hundred village kids. But who had to stick his nose in grown-up people's affairs? You, of course, *you!* Do you even understand that if you had been five years older, you would at this moment be in prison?"

"That leaves a safe margin, Papa," I assured him.

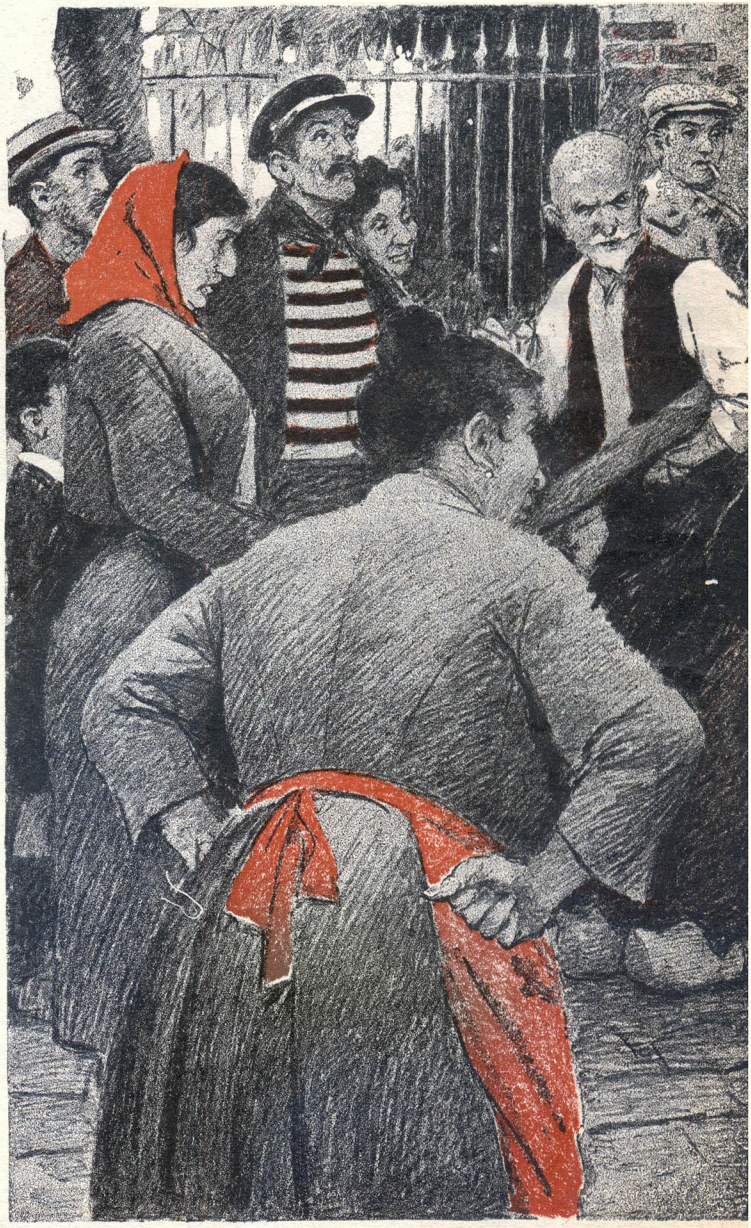
While evidently correct, that statement did not meet with my father's approval. I don't blame him very much for what happened so soon after. He had lost a day's work, to come and take me away from public wrath; he had had to answer many embarrassing, even humiliating questions; he had been threatened with legal claims for damages.

But where he was wrong was in insisting that I got into scrapes on purpose. For many years, until I looked back on my boyhood, I thought him unjust. It must have seemed extraordinary to an adult who could not follow developments step by step that whenever anything unusual occurred any place we chanced to be residing, whether village, town or city, I would be found in the thickest of the excitement.

The links of the logical chain that connected events and made my participation inevitable could not be discerned easily, but they existed. On this occasion my father was irritated because I had got mixed up in the feud between Blaise Courtal and Mounted Gendarme Ruspoli, which also involved a beautiful young woman, a nervous mayor, an old man nicknamed Malgache, sundry citizens, and a Swiss Army rifle, repeating model 1889/96, caliber 7.5.

I was eleven that summer; my family was living in the city of Bezanval, eastern France, and I had been permitted to go on vacation to the picturesque village of Saint-Pierre-aux-Bois, all of twenty miles away. It will be made clear that nothing that happened was my fault. But I concede that my status in the village was not quite clear.

I had arrived, with thirty-nine other boys from Bezanval, boys ranging from ten to fourteen, forming what was called a vacation colony, and supposedly reserved for the children of in-



The village constable, who doubled as cryer, went around beating his drum and

There Once Was a Gendarme

The gifted author of "Homeland" gives us another lively story of his French boyhood

by GEORGES SURDEZ

"THERE were fifty boys from the city," my father shouted; "and probably a hundred village kids. But who had to stick his nose in grown-up people's affairs? You, of course, *you!* Do you even understand that if you had been five years older, you would at this moment be in prison?"

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I was eleven that summer; my family was living in the city of Bezanval, eastern France, and I had been permitted to go on vacation to the picturesque village of Saint-Pierre-aux-Bois, all of twenty miles away. It will be made clear that nothing that happened was my fault. But I concede that my status in the village was not quite clear.

I had arrived, with thirty-nine other boys from Bezanval, boys ranging from ten to fourteen, forming what was called a vacation colony, and supposedly reserved for the children of indigent families. My people were not considered indigent; I had not been eligible, technically; but I had wanted to go very much, as several of my school pals were going. My father always reproached me with my lack of push and initiative, and I made a strong effort to prove myself. I had wangled my way in under an unusual and probably not altogether regular arrangement, by the terms of which my parents contributed a small sum.

That would never have come to light if I had not got into trouble. As it was, it led to an awkward probing. For example, who was responsible to the village authorities for the mess I had caused, the charity organization or my father? That might appear like a pretty small and useless bit of hair-splitting, but the splitting of hairs was the ruling passion of minor rural officials in that happy region.

The village constable, who doubled as cryer, went around beating his drum and

reading the proclamation. You might have thought the Cossacks had returned.

I HAD been assigned to the Brétain Farm in the village, paired with my particular chum Eugene, son of a barber. The Brétains collected a certain amount for our room and board. Inside forty-eight hours, Eugene and I had quarreled, he had broken relations with me and informed the other boys in our bunch that I was along as a part-payer, therefore not quite one of them. The full-payers of course kept the wards of the city at a distance. The village children resented us as city kids tainted by advanced republican ideas, and potential anarchists and atheists.

Overnight, I found myself an outcast, isolated from my kind, and forced to seek other company. Wandering over the fields and through the woods, I made a number of acquaintances and a couple of friends.

Here is produced a link of that logical chain mentioned: My mother had a third, or fourth cousin, Emile, who was considered a questionable character. He seldom worked, and spent his time tramping. He had served twenty years in the Foreign Legion, collected a pension for length of service, wounds and decorations. Everywhere we had lived, in Switzerland, in Alsace, in France, from mountain hamlets to the big city, he had dropped in on us. He ate like a wolf and drank like a Légionnaire. But I liked him, and he liked me.

a Gendarme

The gifted author of "Homeland" gives us another lively story of his French boyhood

by
GEORGES SURDEZ

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"That will help you get calm! You got to learn— Had enough?"

He had taught me many songs of the Colonial Army. It will be admitted that I was not responsible for the existence of a man forty-odd years my senior, nor for his being a member of my family, nor for his having served in the Legion. And what could be more natural than for a small boy walking along a forest lane on a perfect summer afternoon to be whistling a marching song—which chanced to be the one about "settling the affairs of the Queen of Madagascar?"

A tall, rawboned man, much in need of a shave, who was chopping wood in a clearing hailed me. He turned out to be Monsieur Bargelat, odd-jobs man and former Légionnaire, known locally as "the Malgache," because he had served in Madagascar. I had to tell him where I had learned that song, and he was sure he had met my relative somewhere, in Dahomey or on a transport in the Red Sea. I could not know that he was in a three-cornered tie with two other men for the title of champion drunkard of the district; and had I known, I would not have passed judgment: I was a broad-minded little boy.

We became firm friends. I would look him up on the job, and on Sunday I accompanied him. We would get drunk together, he on alcohol, I on lemonade with a dash of berry syrup and his wonderful yarns swarming with Sakalavas, Hovas, Black Flags and Kroumirs. The villagers claimed he had not been good company for so young a boy. In reality, his Légionnaires were as clean-cut, courageous and disciplined as in schoolbooks; good prevailed over evil; devotion to duty was rewarded; and he chided me when I let slip a mild oath or a coarse word.

It was not from him that I picked up the village gossip. His mind was elsewhere, in Laghouat, Tananarive, Hanoï, Abomey. But our respectable hosts, carefully selected by the organization, discussed scandals at the table. From listening to them, I learned many things about local people—among those things, the details of the rivalry of Courtal and Ruspoli.

Courtal was absent, putting in his military time in an artillery regiment. The girl they were after was Agnes Ferron. I knew her by sight. She was almost eighteen, and what was termed locally "a pretty bit of girl," rather tall, with a large, robust figure and red hair. To me, then untouched by grace and appreciation of feminine charms, she resembled a freckled heifer. Her father owned a fairly important farm, six or seven hundred meters from the village center.

I also knew Ruspoli. He was one of the two horse gendarmes who passed through the village. He was not old, but he was not young, probably in his middle thirties. He was a good-looking man, tall, broad, lean, rather swarthy, with hard black eyes and black curly hair. He had strong white teeth which he loved to show. In his snug uniform, with its shiny high boots, shimmering leathers, spotless belting, with his glitter of buttons and aiguillettes, he was impressive in the saddle or on foot. Beside him, his companion and superior, a middle-aged corporal, looked like a wrinkled sack of blue burlap.

Ruspoli spoke French with a nasal accent, for he was a Corsican. He had served in the Colonies, as attested by his medals. But he had no time for little boys. On the occasion when I asked him about one of those medals, he told me to tell anyone who asked me that I did not know, and he flicked my cheek painfully with his glove.

"Don't have anything to do with that kind," Malgache told me when I reported the incident. "He is a Corsican, and is either all good or all bad, no in-between. You don't find the good ones in the cops." Malgache had the prejudice against the police that is traditional in the Legion. "This one's bad. Why, he was six years in the Penitential Administration as a turnkey. There's no lower trade."

THE situation involving young Courtal, Agnes and Ruspoli was banal enough: Courtal and the girl had been in love for years, considered engaged

by most people. Ruspoli had come along and asked for the girl in marriage. It was rumored that there were a dozen girls in the district who would have accepted the gendarme, for he was a ladies' man; but he was seriously interested only in the one who did not want him. At the beginning, he had had very little chance, because Ferron could not consider an ordinary gendarme as a good match for his daughter, who would inherit part of his farm.

FERRON had never given his consent to Courtal, but had tolerated his attentions, which was a good sign. Courtal, while not poor, was far from rich. His mother ran a tiny store installed in her son-in-law's small farm, at a crossroads, sold drink, needles, postal cards and tobacco, for she had a Government license because her husband, a colonial infantry sergeant, had been killed in action in China. Madame Courtal, I learned, was not for the marriage. She wanted her son to go to a large center to make his career. She thought him extremely handsome and intelligent, too good for a farm girl.

A few weeks before my arrival in the village, there had been a change: Ruspoli had inherited a considerable sum of money from an uncle who had kept a café on the Riviera, fifty to sixty thousand francs—gold standard francs, ten to twelve thousand dollars. With that amount, he intended to quit the cops and open an inn in the region.

He had called on Ferron and officially asked for Agnes' hand. Nothing definite had been agreed, because the girl had asked for time to think it over. Most people thought it was but a matter of time; indeed, that the gendarme was undeniably handsome and certainly rich. The chief objection was that he was from the outside; but those gold francs somehow lightened his complexion and made him seem less alien.

Madame Courtal told everyone who would listen that she was glad, that her son had received a good education—he had gone to *lycée* in Norteau for a while—and once rid of the farm girl, would consider a career in an administration or an insurance company, where his fine handwriting, his ability to keep books, would shoot him ahead rapidly. She had written Blaise, she announced, and explained to him how lucky he was.

I heard her say that herself, one afternoon when Malgache had taken me there for a lemonade. Madame Courtal was about fifty, short and massive, and made it plain that she was above her surroundings. She had come to the country to be with her daughter, who had foolishly married a peasant when he was serving in the Army. She had been educated, she declared; she had traveled—she had lived in Martinique, in Indo-China, with her husband. He had been killed just before becoming a commissioned officer.

"Maybe you shouldn't have written him until things were settled," Malgache said mildly, twisting his tumbler of wine between his muscular hands. "When you're in the Army, you're tied down, and you get to brooding. How long did he know the girl?"

"Since we moved here. Five years."

"That's too bad. If he was here, he'd take it better. But as it is, he may desert."

"Desert? His father was a military man, almost an officer; he has tradition; he would never desert." She tossed her head up, gave a little snap of her jaws. "I brought him up. He would die before doing anything dishonorable, or imploring a stupid girl who makes a fool of him before everybody."

"I wouldn't be too sure, Madame," Malgache said. "Maybe you—"

"Be it said without offense," Madame Courtal declared, with all intention that it would give offense, "you cannot understand my son. After all, you served in the Legion, and we all know what that means."

"What does it mean?" Malgache inquired mildly.

"Well, I lived in the Colonies; I know about Légionnaires. Brave soldiers, yes, but screwballs, men who couldn't face life at home."

As we walked back from the little shop to the clearing where he was sawing wood, Malgache talked: "That woman thinks she is a good mother. But she forgets that she is a woman, and spiteful when she writes about another woman she doesn't like. She will have said just the wrong thing—for instance, that everybody thinks him a fool. A fool about a woman he loves!" He looked at me and gestured helplessly. "You're too young to get that."

"I know it," I agreed.

"But that kind of a letter is bad. Makes a fellow doubt his own judgment, and he has to find out what's what. That boy is just the wrong age to get a letter like that. Takes a while before you get to not caring whether people think you a fool. He won't want people to laugh at him; he'll want to do something tragic. . . . Tragic? That means something that scares people, makes them say: 'Well, guess he's nobody to make a fool of.' "

Malgache, who judged from the general to the particular, proved right against Madame Courtal, who judged from the particular to the general.

Blaise Courtal deserted from his regiment.

There was no radio broadcasting in those days, and very few people subscribed to newspapers, beyond the illustrated weeklies, in our region. But the news was all over the village, less than six hours, in all probability, from the time Blaise Courtal failed to answer roll-call. As it developed later, his chiefs had been expecting something of the sort: First-class Gunner Courtal had applied for a furlough and been turned down. He had shown much excitement, and had been punished with four days' confinement to barracks for insisting too loudly.

His battery commander was to explain later that he understood the lad was laboring under some private stress, but his outfit was already shorthanded, as a number of men had been granted harvest furloughs. He had not expected Courtal, a most intelligent young chap and slated for a corporalship, to lose his head and go off half-cocked. After all, a battery of field artillery was not a circus, and preparations had to be made for the coming maneuvers. But the instant he was reported missing, his destination had been obvious, and the district gendarmerie had been notified.

The regional headquarters at Norteau had notified the cantonal headquarters at Naiche; and Naiche had in turn telephoned to the village hall at Saint-Pierre-aux-Bois. The mayor was Monsieur Vauzeseau, forty-four or so, two hundred pounds of nervousness on a five-foot-five frame.

As a small boy, I thought his manifestation of alarm exaggerated and ludicrous. But in retrospect, I can see several points: A mayor, even in a small village, does not hang isolated from all; he has responsibilities to assume, and a certain prestige to maintain. The mayor did not like to have a deserter among his people. Also, he probably was aware of the value of publicity, and if he could make the incident foam up a bit, it would make the cantonal newspaper—and having one's name in print, no matter how, made one better known and a more likely candidate for deputy.

MAYOR VAUZESEAU did things in style. To start with, he had a sort of proclamation posted up, announcing the desertion of Courtal, Blaise, from the such-and-such artillery regiment, a description of the fugitive and the information that he was headed for the village and might prove dangerous. He offered a reward of fifty francs for information leading to his capture.

The village constable, who doubled as cryer, went around beating his drum and reading the proclamation in a nasal, halting voice. You might have thought the Cossacks had returned. There was a reassuring conclusion, to the effect that it had been arranged for a "brigade" of mounted police to come and cover the spots most likely to attract the dangerous character—the

Ferron Farm and Madame Courtal's establishment.

Our hosts discussed that at the table, too. I overheard that Vauzeseau had another motive for his excitement—it was a chance to humiliate Madame Courtal, who had obtained a tobacco-selling license against the mayor's candidate, years before. Also, Madame Courtal, who had lived in big cities and abroad, had been reported to have said that Madame Mayor Vauzeseau had no taste in dress and got herself up "like a faggot."

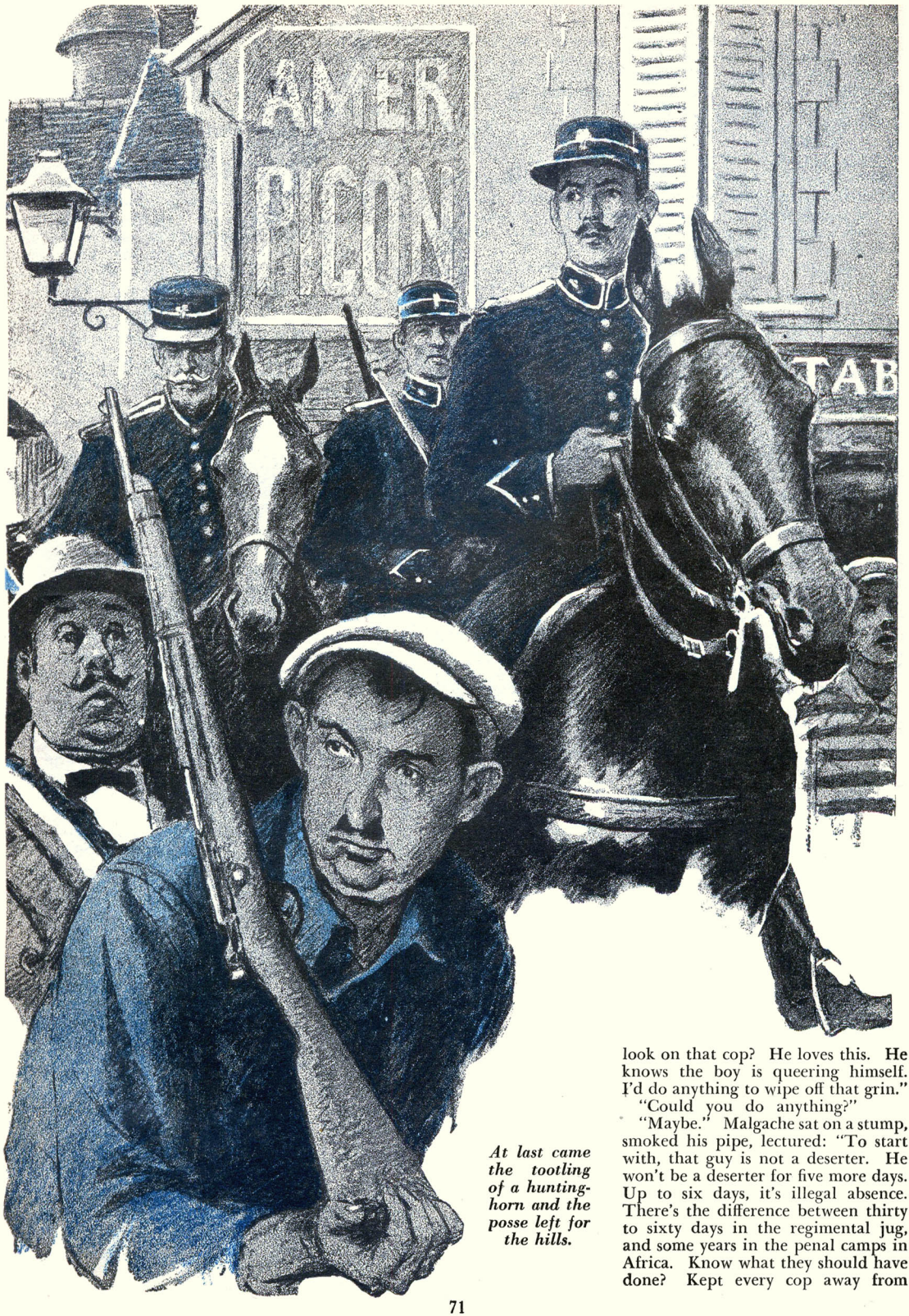
The gendarmes did arrive, four of them, including Ruspoli, who looked very stern and fierce. A number of civilian and semi-civilian volunteers, such as hunting guards, customs-agents off duty, put in appearance. The frontier posts into Switzerland, forty miles away, were alerted. The immediate vicinity of Saint-Pierre was not mountainous, but it was wild enough, and the real mountains were not far off. The gendarmes were quartered in an annex of the village hall and did not move around much; but the volunteers formed patrols, which could be met, prowling about, guns in hand, sly and wary as Sioux warriors in the "Buffalo Bill" stories.

Courtal had been seen, still in his artilleryman's uniform, at the Norteau depot, by reliable witnesses. Other witnesses, less reliable, claimed to have glimpsed him in the hills, armed with a carbine.

I was skeptical about all of this and told Malgache so.

"If he had taken his Army gun," I pointed out, "his captain would have said so. And Courtal would be wanted not only for desertion but for theft of Government equipment."

"You're right," Malgache admitted; "but this is bad, just the same. Put guns into people's hands and somebody will shoot. Just see how trouble starts, young fellow: A young guy goes crazy with jealousy; all he wants is to see the girl and have her tell him not to worry. But before they're through, some fool will shoot off a gun, and he'll be blamed for the whole mess, even if he isn't hurt." The ex-Légionnaire scowled and resumed: "Did you see the contented



At last came the tootling of a hunting-horn and the posse left for the hills.

look on that cop? He loves this. He knows the boy is queering himself. I'd do anything to wipe off that grin."

"Could you do anything?"

"Maybe." Malgache sat on a stump, smoked his pipe, lectured: "To start with, that guy is not a deserter. He won't be a deserter for five more days. Up to six days, it's illegal absence. There's the difference between thirty to sixty days in the regimental jug, and some years in the penal camps in Africa. Know what they should have done? Kept every cop away from

here, and told that girl to talk the guy into turning himself in before the limit. Because he's not going to leave until he has seen her—I know that."

"You mean you used to like girls, Malgache?"

"Just like I like absinthe now, sure." He rose and stretched. "Let's go over and have a drink."

We cut across the wood and reached Madame Courtal's little shop. There were several people there, and a short chap in a queer greenish uniform was seated on a chair in the yard. I had a lemonade with syrup; Malgache had a double absinthe.

MADAME COURTAL was back of her four feet of zinc-topped counter, mopping her leaking face. She was the object of loud sympathy—that was a mother's lot, to slave and scrimp for a boy, only to have him turn criminal over some chit of a girl. She was genuinely grieving, but paraded her damp balls of linen, her heaving breast and dripping eyes with some personal enjoyment. She occasionally broke into a sort of sobbing litany.

"My poor, crazy boy! My darling! Ah, what I would give to have him safe, out of trouble, back in his regiment. Ah, but he is so like his father—he would have killed anyone who so much as looked at me in a certain way. I wasn't always an old woman, you know. Once, in Bac-Phao—that's in Tonkin—I had to take his service revolver from his hand because a Colonial administrator, second class, had sent me a note. . . . Ah, my poor boy, my poor boy—I'd give all I have in the world to have him back with his regiment and all this over—"

"They won't give him more than two years," a charitable friend told her. "This isn't war-time. And then he'll have to serve out his regular time with the African Battalions—"

"Two years, two years! I'd give a thousand francs this moment to—"

Malgache had finished dripping water over his lump of sugar, had taken the first sips.

"How much did you say, Madame Courtal?" he asked suddenly.

"Well, I'd give a lot. I am not a rich woman."

"A thousand francs, you said."

"Where would I find that much money?"

"All right, what would you give? Five hundred francs?"

"One talks away, one talks away, without thinking. But if it was possible, I'd go as far as two hundred francs. But how can anyone do anything—"

"I could try," Malgache announced confidently.

"But how could you—"

"You should never tell how you do things of this kind," Malgache pointed out. "Suppose we put it this way: Will you sign me a paper saying that I am to collect two hundred francs from you Sunday morning if your boy is back with his regiment Saturday afternoon, and gets only regimental punishment?"

"Could you do that?" Madame Courtal asked suspiciously.

"If I can't, you don't have to pay me anything."

Two hundred francs were forty dollars in those days—a sum, as a day laborer on a farm earned two or three francs a day. Madame Courtal hesitated, probably feeling that if Malgache could know a way out she could guess it and try it herself. But other customers said that the offer was reasonable. And what did Madame Courtal have to lose?

She made a first draft, which Malgache turned down, because she had put in the condition: If Monsieur Bargelat, known as the Malgache, causes my son and so on. Malgache said he did not want that—he wanted it to state that if Blaise Courtal was back with his regiment on time to avoid court-martial, no matter how, he, Malgache, was to be paid two hundred francs.

"You see, the way I work, it won't look as if I had anything to do with it. You could say, well, my boy is all right, but he would have been all right without Malgache."

Madame Courtal hesitated: "But suppose I sign this, and he turns himself in without you doing anything—"

"A chance you take. Take it or leave it."

She had talked herself into a corner and she took it.

"Here is your paper," she said, "and I hope that nobody here will be low enough to blab to the police."

"Oh, that wouldn't matter," Malgache declared, "seeing I am working for law and order. Good day, everybody."

On the road outside, I tried to go my own way, as I wanted to follow the patrols. But Malgache held me back, asked me to walk to the clearing with him.

"I'll need you on this, Arthur," he said.

Once more, I point out that I could not refuse him, that I had no choice. He was an older person whom I admired. My own father had instructed me always to be of service, even at serious inconvenience to myself. If Malgache needed me to win two hundred francs, what was there for me to do?

Malgache found his favorite stump, indicated another for me.

"I'll explain things to you, but you mustn't tell anybody. Promise? All right. Now, people have thought of everything but the right thing. Why did Courtal desert? Because of the girl. Who is the only one who can reason with him? The girl. Old lady Courtal doesn't think of that, because she is jealous and won't admit that Agnes can influence her boy more than herself. Now, if he sees the girl, and she tells him everything is all right, that his mother wrote in spite about what she didn't know, if she tells him she'll hold out and not marry the cop, wait for him to come home from the Army, he'll believe her.

"Now, if he is around, what is he trying to do? To see the girl. But the mayor's scared her family into thinking he might hurt her. They have a couple of guys with guns hanging around—and the girl isn't allowed to go out by herself; and if she was, she doesn't know where to go. What he wants to do is have a meeting with her. But how can he get word to her, when he knows he'll be pinched on sight?"

"He could mail a letter," I said logically.

"Wouldn't do any good. That's part of the trouble. Ferron's strict, and watches the mail. Otherwise, she'd have written him before, and told him what was what."

"Suppose she says she likes the cop better?"

"She won't say that. She's a young woman, and they've been trying to push her around, make her say she'd have the cop and his dough. Now, I bet she is crazy about Courtal, because she loved him in the first place, and he's done this nutty stunt because of her, taken a chance on wrecking his life. That always does something to a woman, even if it isn't sensible. You heard the old lady talk about her man was going out with a gun because some guy had written her a mash note? That must have been thirty years ago, but she never forgot that. All the taking good care of her, supporting her and so on doesn't count beside his wanting to do a crazy thing like shooting the fellow out of jealousy. No, just now, Courtal's in solid with the girl, and she's ready to show him she's just as crazy."

"Oh, sure," I said vaguely.

"NOW, watch this," he said, taking a stick and drawing lines on the ground: "Here's Ferron's place. The cops are here and here. Courtal can spot them when he gets here and here—" Each time, the stick made a mark. "If he is in the region, he's hanging around back here, as close as he can get without being spotted. Hanging around to talk to her if she happens to pass by. He knows those woods, and he hides. You're going to take walks all through there, back and forth, whistling if you want. He'll come around and ask you to take a note to her."

"Why me?" I protested. "You could, or another kid—"

"I'll tell you why: He probably knows that there's some money on him, and he wouldn't show himself to a grown-up. The village kids know him, and would run for the cops. The other city kids go around in gangs. No, nobody else will do. You see, he'll spot you, watch you. Alone, whistling, a summer kid who doesn't know him. He'll argue himself into taking a chance. You come to me, and I'll do the rest."

"All right," I said. What else could I have said?

I tramped around the woods in the area indicated all that afternoon. At nightfall, I reported failure to Malgache, who told me to try again early in the morning. I obeyed that suggestion, too. Meanwhile, the mayor and the police were organizing a hunt for the following day; there would be a lot more volunteers to form a cordon, and several men were bringing their dogs. This did not go without noise and commotion, rolling of the drum and loud proclamations. Two men in city clothes were at the inn, supposed to be reporters from Bézanval papers.

FROM six-thirty to nine-thirty I walked the woods, back of the Ferron property. Then I went to meet Malgache, and we had our mid-morning snack together.

"He isn't around," I opined.

"Look, just try it again until noon," he urged. "He must have heard the proclamation; he knows they'll drive him out toward the frontier tomorrow. He'll talk to you."

"What do I say to him—what do I do?"

"Do whatever he asks you to do, and when he gives you a note or a message for the girl, bring it to me."

It must have been eleven o'clock when I saw a man walking down a lane toward me. He was tall and young, wore a baggy blue blouse, heavy shoes and an old cap with flaps. He said hello, like anybody else, and passed by. But I was sure it was Courtal, when I saw that his trousers were dark blue and showed loose spots where the double red stripe of the artillery garments had been ripped off.

Just as I was wondering what to do, he stopped and returned.

"Hello, kid. New around here, aren't you?"

"No. Been here a couple of weeks."

"Vacation colony?"

"Sure."

He stood before me, fumbling a cigarette. He seemed very tense and frightened. I had seen fugitives before, a couple of them, but they had been comparatively calm. Courtal was pretty tall and pretty well built, good looking in a sort of soft way, even if he did need a shave. There was nothing frightening about him.

"Hear about the deserter?" he asked next, lamely.

"Who hasn't?"

"I came up with a bunch from Lerichar—that's down the hill a way. They think they can get that reward." He looked up and down the lane, wiped his perspiring face. "Look—you look to me like a pretty smart boy—" If he was waiting for a contradiction, he did not get it. "I know a girl around here, and her people are sort of against me, don't want to see me around. I'll give you a note. Fifty centimes to start, and as much from the girl; I'll ask her. But you must get it to her when nobody's around—can you do it?"

"That depends," I informed him. "Which one?"

That bothered him, obviously: If I knew about the deserter, I must know about the girl. But he could not give me a note to deliver without telling me to whom. He took so long reflecting that I lost patience.

"I got to get back for lunch. They sit down at twelve-thirty, and if you miss anything, you just don't get it."

"Look, you mustn't be seen. You—"

"You said that before."

"You wait until after lunch, then."

"All right. I'll see that nobody spots us."

He sat down on a big stone, pulled out a little notebook with a pencil attached. He wrote and wrote, then tore out and crumpled the pages. Finally he had to be satisfied with one version. He folded the papers and handed them over, with the fifty centimes.

"It's for Agnes Ferron. Know her?"

"Sure." I hooked a thumb over my shoulder. "Just down that way a bit. She'll be helping her mother with the chow just now, but around two or so, she'll be out in the yard or on the road, most likely."

"Look," he resumed: "If you manage it, I'll see you again and make you a real present."

I started down the lane; and when I turned, fifty steps farther, he had merged into the bushes. I found Malgache at the clearing, turned the message over to him. He read it several times, his lips moving, and moved his head in an odd gesture of amusement and compassion.

"He's got it bad," he muttered.

"Do I deliver it to her?" I asked.

"No. You can go and get your lunch. Be back here at two-thirty, and if I am not here, wait for me. I'll need you some more."

There was cabbage and boiled potatoes and smoked sausages for lunch. And the host, his wife and his relatives discussed the man-hunt, speculated on the outcome. The women, as Malgache had led me to expect, considered Blaise Courtal as something of a hero; the men thought him a big fool. My friend Eugene, who was talking to me again, told me he and two other boys had been allowed to follow one of the patrols, but that I need not expect to share this privilege. I amply earned my fifty centimes by not telling him I had conversed with the hunted man himself.

At two-thirty, I was at the clearing. Malgache did not show up until after three. His breath smelled of absinthe, and he was a bit elated.

"It's all right. She'll help."

"She won't double-cross you?" I wondered.

"Not a chance." Malgache heaved a sigh. "But it's a good thing I am in on this. She'd have rushed off and got the two of them caught." He found another sharp stick and drew another map for me. "He wanted her to meet him tonight, over here. Says he'll wait all day around there, in case she can make it. But unless she meets him before midnight, he tells her, he knows what he has to do, and to whom, that she will never be Madame Ruspoli.

"She wanted to keep his note, the little dummy! And she was mad when I burned it up. Threats in writing against a gendarme, proof of premeditation, the difference between twenty years in the pen and the guillotine, if he does go off the deep end—but what's that beside keeping his love note inside her shirtwaist! Now, you take this and head for that place, I'll follow."

He handed me an envelope. I noticed at once that it was plain and that there was nothing inside. I said so.

"You carry it in your hand," he outlined; "he'll think that's her answer, and pop out to get it. Then you can explain about me, and I'll show up. I don't want to be shot, even by mistake—"

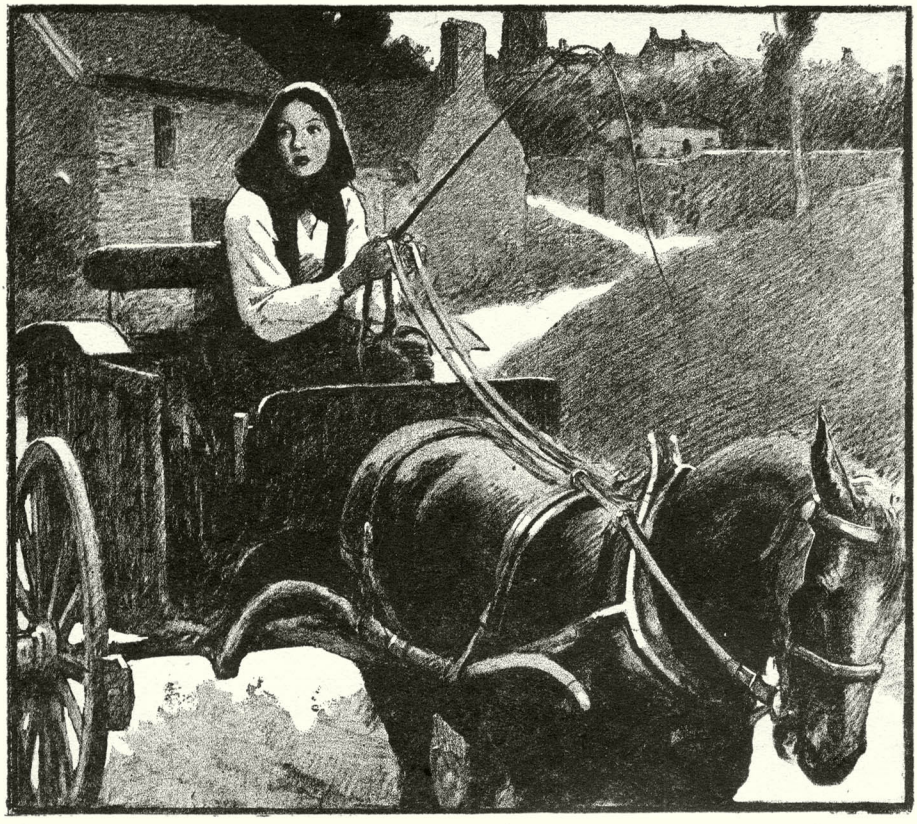
"He has no gun, Malgache," I protested.

Malgache looked at me sadly.

"Couple of things you have to learn, young fellow: Never think a man has no gun just because you don't see it. And never think a gun is unloaded. Even if you've emptied it a second before, always know a gun is always loaded."

I BROODED over this as I walked through the woods once more. I was getting a bit fed up with these excursions. I had a definite hunch that if my parents knew what I was doing they would blame me, and say it was just like me, up to my neck in what was none of my business.

The meeting-place was well chosen, in the lee of a high rock formation, near a small brook. I sat down, holding my blank envelope, and waited. The brook made appropriate murmuring sounds; the summer wind sang



I learned, for instance, that Agnes Ferron had had a fit of the blues and that her parents had sent her to Norteau at dawn.

in the trees and the songbirds worked their little gullets recklessly. A few minutes passed; then, with a light thud, Courtal dropped before me.

How right Malgache had been! He held a rifle, and a clean, efficient-looking rifle, which I identified at once as not a French artillery carbine at all, not even an ordinary Lébel, but a Swiss repeating rifle.

"That's a Swiss rifle," I said, pointing. "How did you—"

But he had taken the envelope, looked at it, into it. He grasped my shoulder with one hand, lifted me erect. "Where's the note, what did you do with it?"

"Just a minute there, fellow—" I started.

But his mildness had vanished. I suppose there is something about holding a loaded rifle that influences one's mood. He shook me until my teeth clashed together. His eyes, flecked with fire, burned into me, his face twisted. "I suppose you want to sell it to me, you lousy little rat—"

I did not know then that a love note could be more important than money. I just thought he had gone insane. I struggled to free myself, and he had to rest his gun on the ground to hold me between his knees and search my pockets.

"Let go of the kid," Malgache said, bobbing from nowhere. He moved between the furious lad and the rifle. "Sit down and let's talk."

"You drunken old tramp," Courtal replied. "I suppose you want that fifty-francs reward."

He doubled his fists and rushed for Malgache. The ex-Légionnaire was older by thirty-five years, soaked in alcohol. He was not much taller than the deserter, certainly not as heavy. But he reacted with a startling, unhurried efficiency. I did not follow every move, but there was a flurry of bodies, a series of thumps, and then Malgache had Courtal face down, and knelt on his back, holding his arms outstretched.

"Not yet, not yet. They don't do that to me yet," Malgache said, in a rather panting voice. He drove one knee hard as the other struggled. "That will help you get calm, white beak! And that's what wants to fight a gendarme, a Corsican gendarme! Why, my good friend, Ruspoli would tear you apart and pick his teeth with your bones! You got to learn, you got to learn— Had enough?"

"Yes, all right."

Malgache rose calmly, permitted the other to do the same, indicated the rifle: "In case you're afraid I'm turning you over to the cops, pick up your clarinet. You'll feel safer that way. I didn't want to smack you, but you went after the kid, and you jumped me—"

"All right, all right. I'm sorry."

"Here's a note from your girl." Malgache gave the young fellow a paper. When it was read, he took it and touched a match to it. "Complicity, abetting a deserter. Bad to leave lying around."

"She says to trust you," Courtal admitted, still working dirt out of his ears and nostrils.

"Nice of her. Now, here's what has to be done: the mayor and his pals will start after you tomorrow, supposedly at dawn. But they'll argue a long time as to who goes where, stop to have a few for the road, and it'll be six-thirty before they really get going. You were dumb to ask your girl to come out to meet you, with her whole family watching her like cats. I'll find a way to fix that.

"She'll tell her folks that she doesn't want to be around if you're arrested. They'll believe that. So she'll take the light cart and make an early start for Norteau, where there's a fair going on just now, to peddle eggs and stuff and use the money to buy a dress, or

a hat. She's done that often. You'll wait for her at the Lorette Cross, down the road, pop out and climb into the back, where she'll hide you under sacks and crates.

"You go on to Norteau with her, and she stops right before the Gendarmerie. You go in and say you're reporting yourself, short of the limit for desertion, and ask to be checked in and sent back to your regiment. It will still be only illegal absence. My hunch is that with your good record, not a day in the can until this mess started, your captain will back you, and all you'll draw down is fifteen days in the jug. At the very most, with the general butting in, it would be a ninety."

"What about Ruspoli? He said I didn't have the guts to—"

"What you going to do to him? If you shoot him, it's Guiana or the guillotine. If you hit him, it's assaulting a cop, real prison for a couple of years, the penitentiary, the African Battalions. You're sunk, put away for a long while. Challenge him to a fair fight? He's had training, you're green as grass; he'd handle you easier than I did. Learn to fight—you're strong and you're young. He's quitting the cops soon, so in a few years, if you're still burned up about it, which I doubt, he will be a plain civilian and you can look him up and say: 'I want to tell you a little story, There was once a gendarme,' and go to work on him."

"But supposing her family forces her to marry him?"

"Do you think Ruspoli will insist on that after it gets around that she drove to Norteau and went to the police with you?"

"It will ruin her reputation," Courtal started in protest.

"And there was no risk of that when you asked her to meet you alone and at night in the woods? As you're the guy who'll marry her, why worry about her reputation?"

"That's true." Courtal had run out of tobacco and rolled a cigarette from makings tossed him by Malgache. He said awkwardly: "I called you some pretty dirty names. I want to apologize. You're a pretty good guy to help me out."

"I'll be paid for it," Malgache cut him short. He indicated the rifle. "You better get rid of that. If they catch you with it, it'll be poison."

Courtal's face grew tense again. "If you don't mind, I'll keep it until morning. Just in case."

"Play games if you want to," Malgache retorted, shrugging.

"It belongs to—" Courtal named a farmer some distance away. "He bought it, years ago, from a smuggler who had swiped it from a customs-guard across the way. I happened to know where he bunked it, and took it without telling him. I'd like to give it back."

"Better not carry it around too much." Malgache thought it over a moment. "You might hide it right here, with the cartridges. That pack of fools will work over this stretch pretty early, and the kid here can pick it up before noon, maybe wrap it in a sack and take it back where it belongs. You can do that, can't you, Arthur? You don't mind?"

"Oh, no," I said, "not at all."

"See, I'd do it myself, but if I was spotted, I'd have to answer a lot of foolish questions. There's a number on that rifle—it can be traced; and they'd ask me where and how I'd got hold of it. While if you're caught with it, all you have to do is tell the truth: you found it in the woods. They know you didn't come here with it, and maybe you weren't even born when it was swiped from a Swiss."

No one could have reasoned more logically.

I was up early the next morning, circulating up and down the single street, contemplating the various groups of men in the farmyards, hung with guns and pouches, the people having breakfast at the inn, the four gendarmes and their sleek horses. Here and there, I gleaned information. I learned, for instance, that Agnes Ferron had had a fit of the blues and that her parents had sent her to Norteau at dawn, to buy a few trinkets. The Courtal shop was open, but the daughter tended the bar, serving hot black coffee and cognac to the "hunters," for Madame was in her room, prostrated by fear and grief.

Just as Malgache had predicted, however, the posse was taking a long time getting under way. There was a council of war at the hall, complete with maps and dividers; a retired Army officer was allotting zones and routes. The mayor bustled about, in a corduroy suit, gaiters and a small felt hat with a feather on one side.

That costume was to become nationally famous during the next months; Monsieur Vauzeseau was cartooned in the Paris weeklies. For a few reporters had arrived and elected to treat the entire matter as a rural farce. The good mayor of Saint-Pierre-aux-Bois was given an official blame, too—for having gone beyond his prerogatives and duties to instigate a manhunt. The fact that a little blood was mixed with the humor simply added spice to the episode.

People popping in and out of the official conference reported developments: who was going to be in charge of which sector for the search, how many fire weapons were to be included in each group. Ruspoli, looking like a gendarme lifted from a color plate in an album, went in, very resolute, his military mustache in battle array. He offered to ride alone, in the lead, to draw fire and make the fugitive expose himself. Courtal, he explained, detested him and would be tempted. In that way, the gendarme concluded, he would take most of the risk in what he considered, after all, something of a personal quarrel!

He was turned down by the council, of course, but complimented on his daring.

Malgache also was among those present, armed with a stout club, accompanied by the two disreputable chaps who competed with him for drinking honors. One had the end club of a flail and a small axe, the other a rusty old shotgun mended with wire. The ex-Légionnaire had had a few drinks already, and paid little attention to me, for he was absorbed in a blind fury against Ruspoli.

"He's a show-off, a bluffer. If they had accepted his proposition, I bet he'd have folded like an accordion, deflated. I know Corsicans, I do. Had them for comrades, for sergeants, for officers. Those that have guts are the guttiest guys in the world. But the others, the others! Ruspoli's one of the others! I can smell fear on him, like I was a hound!"

At last there came the tootling of a hunting-horn and the posse gathered briefly, separated into small groups, left the village for the hills. The inhabitants could keep track of their progress after a fashion, for a number of the patrolmen were equipped with hunting-horns, bugles and whistles. Toots, trills and shrills receded in the distance. Around ten o'clock, a motor-car chugged through, driven by a doctor rushing to tend Madame Courtal.

Although my opinion of that lady was colored by Malgache's, it was unlikely she was faking. The sight and sounds of all these men starting to catch her only son must have affected her. It turned out later that the doctor's presence was providential.

The village was emptied of boys; from the age of six upward, they had spilled out after the line of beaters combing the hills. The women, little girls and toddlers hung about in clusters, in doorways, at the public laundry. Even the dogs, seemingly prey to the general expectant anguish, prowled about with unusual caution and in comparative silence.

At eleven-five precisely, by the clock on the steeple, I started out on my own mission. There were very few people about in the fields; the roads were deserted. The van of the drive had sucked in all idlers. I carried a folded sack under one arm. I was a lonely-looking, inconspicuous little figure. Yet I knew I held an impor-

tant rôle. It was up to me to clean up after the deserter, to remove the last item that might have incriminated him.

I located the rifle easily, under a jutting ledge of rock. There were several clips of cartridges, which proved too heavy for my pants pockets and which I hid inside my shirt, under my blue smock.

THE drive was headed in the general direction of the Swiss frontier, villages in between having been alerted to watch for and report the deserter. My path to the farmhouse where I was to deliver the Swiss repeater was in the same direction, but Malgache had said that the hunt would have passed it before eleven. Malgache had proved right in everything; he was an ex-Légionnaire. I had nothing to worry about.

Nothing but the rifle. It is easy to write now: I carried a rifle. But I was eleven, and not overly large or strong for my age. That weapon proved dynamically inert. It was tremendously heavy and long for me, which Malgache had overlooked. To be called upon for a comparative effort, a six-foot man weighing one hundred and eighty pounds would have had to carry an object eight feet long, one foot in circumference and some thirty pounds in weight.

The sack I had brought did not conceal it completely; either the butt or the muzzle, both identifiable at long range, protruded. I had to use both hands to support it when clear of my body. It chafed my bony shoulders so that I had to keep shifting it. I tried to carry it on the sling, but the sling had been adjusted for a man and allowed the weapon to drag low and trip me. I undertook to adjust the buckles, but they were firm, and I only tore my fingernails. If I tried toting it across my shoulder horizontally, in the style of the African Infantry, it caught on tree trunks and bushes. That rifle knocked me down repeatedly. After twenty minutes, I was drenched with sweat, out of breath, humiliated and angry.

The cartridges also proved balky. As I walked, the clips kept moving under my shirt, against my skin, edged downward, doggedly crept between the retaining belt and the free zone of my pants, so that they dropped to the ground. I understood fully at that time the necessity for ammunition pouches and bandoliers. I sat down to rest more and more often, and occupied some time in weeping over my lot.

I cursed Courtal, Malgache, all rifles, even Swiss rifles. Several times I was on the point of laying down the weapon, nodding a casual farewell, and walking away. But I had promised to deliver it, and I was a boy of character. It is bitter to think that if I had had less willpower, I would have had much less trouble. What infuriated me later was that the transporting of that clumsy thing had been considered mere boyish frolic.

Throughout, I observed some measure of caution—I watched right and left when I crossed a road; I kept on trails.

At last, at almost exactly noon, with the summer sun pouring down like molten lead, I fell flat on top of a hill, in a thicket. Two hundred yards below was the farm I was headed for.

It seemed deserted, though smoke oozed from the chimney. The watchdog chained to his hut in the yard must have smelled me, I thought, for he was barking excitedly.

I had some pride. I decided to rest long enough to look strong and calm when I delivered the weapon. To be done right, I had to seem casual, as if I delivered rifles every day. I sat down, listened to the birds, chewed on some hard candy I located in a pocket. The rifle, with its satiny stock, the burnished barrel, looked interesting again.

"I wonder if it's loaded," I thought. "Malgache says a gun is always loaded."

That speculation had a certain charm. And it brought serious consideration: Should I turn in a loaded gun? Somebody might be hurt. I could, of course, operate the breechblock with the lever and eject the cartridge, if there was one. I tried it and gave it up when I found the mechanism hard to work. I reasoned that there was no sense in forcing it open, perhaps breaking some part. My father had told me that although firearms looked so solid, they were easily put out of order.

WHAT had really happened was that I had succumbed to temptation and wanted to fire the gun, so I was discarding other possibilities as likely to be injurious. I had done some shooting with the small-caliber Flobert carbine, and even fired Army rifles before. I knew that the Swiss rifle had a strong kick, nothing of matter to a grown man, but enough to knock a boy off his feet, unless he was very careful.

I decided not to stand. I braced the gun on a fork of branches in a stout bush, deliberately sought for a target.

I had turned my back on the house now, and was looking down another slope on my right. Some distance away was a large hunk of rock, with some shaled-off patches that glistened in the sun. I lined the sights with great care.

I squeezed the trigger—and it did not move; nothing happened. I squeezed harder without result. Then I remembered to loosen the catch, took a deep breath, held it according to what I had been told, squeezed the trigger again.

The gun went off, much quicker and much louder than I had expected. I felt the shock on my shoulder and a jarring blow on my cheek, but nothing very painful.

NEVERTHELESS, in the next two or three seconds, I was stunned and bewildered. I appeared to have set off a chain of detonations. The entire hillside seemed to crack and thud. Men started to shout, startlingly near, one suddenly screamed; there were crashings and thrashings in the bushes; there were yells:

"He's up there!"

"Get a doctor!"

"Someone's hit!"

Then someone roared out: "Keep down, you bunch of donkeys! Keep down!"

There followed another series of detonations; then somebody used a whistle, in the cadence signaling: "Cease fire."

Panic-struck, breathless, I remained flat on my back, having rolled over in the first moment of surprise. I did not dare stand. I was sure I had heard impacts in the branches above me. Quivering, I waited for developments.

They came. Some few feet to my left, there was a rustling in the grass and bushes, leaves parted, and a face crested by a military képi appeared. It was that of the middle-aged corporal of gendarmes, the color of old Camembert cheese, eyes popping, gray mustache bristling over a firmly compressed mouth. Before that face sprouted a big, pudgy fist, and in that fist was a service revolver, caliber .38.

"In the name of—"

The corporal broke off as he identified me. Oddly, the muzzle of the revolver directed at my head had not frightened me as much as the poor man's expression when he lowered it. He emerged like an enraged pachyderm, picked me up and shook me.

"Did you shoot?"

"Yes; I didn't know you were—"

"Is he around here?"

"Who?"

"Courtal, Blaise Courtal, the deserter?"

"No, Monsieur le Caporal, he's in Norteau."

"All right, all right," the corporal then shouted. "It's nothing. Just a kid."

People arrived from all directions, by twos and threes, then by fours and sixes. Everybody seemed to be there, the gendarmes, the hunting guards, the volunteers, the out-of-towners said to be reporters. The rifle and cartridges were picked up and ex-

amined, passed from hand to hand. Men fired questions at me.

Everything that had occurred was perfectly normal. The man from whom Courtal had "swiped" the rifle had missed it, had reported to the authorities. The mayor and his aides had thought that the fugitive, having taken shelter near that particular farm, would head for it when closely pursued. They had made a great deploy all over the landscape, then gradually concentrated to form a trap. Coming from their rear, I had slipped through their cordon without being spied.

My shot had startled them all into action; men had pressed triggers without knowing what they were shooting at—a common failing of undisciplined volunteers. The trouble was that one man had been hit in the thigh by a bullet, and another had some few buckshot in his shoulder.

A gentleman who seemed to know his business examined my cheek and smelled of my hands, and declared that it was true I had fired the shot. Those people were not very angry with me just then; they seemed relieved. They led me down into the farmyard and held a conference; then they took me inside for further questioning.

I told them the strict truth, that I had found the rifle hidden under a rock. Somebody asked me how I knew it was a Swiss rifle; and I replied that I should know, that my father had served in the Swiss Army, that I had lived in Switzerland. That brought out the terrifying fact that I was a foreigner!

"And a vacation-colony ward, too!" The mayor grew angry immediately: "Other countries send us their indigent to be fed and cared for! That's the result of a rotten socialist administration in our populous centers—no patriotism, everybody equal, anything is accepted, anything goes—"

"My parents are paying for my keep, Monsieur le Maire," I corrected him.

"That's irregular!"

ALL around us was bustling and shouting. The wounded had been brought in, settled on chairs, and there was a lot of fussing with tin basins and lint, a growing litter of blood-stained rags and blood-tinted water. Pipes, cigars, cigarettes were lighted; the farmer had produced bottles and tumblers.

"Eh, Corporal," a hooked-nose man, a known poacher, remarked, "did you see what your pal was doing while you were creeping up? He turned and ran like a hare when that shot came. Some cop, some cop, eh! Guillaume—you were right beside me: didn't Ruspoli duck pretty?"

"He sure did," the other agreed. "He dropped his carbine—the proof? Here it is, I picked it up. He was going downhill like the wind."

"But you acted right, Corporal," the gentleman said. "I'll see that your superiors know of that. After all, it might have been Courtal."

"I'm a plain man and just did my duty," the corporal agreed. "As for Ruspoli, I'll give him a piece of my mind." He shrugged, and added in loyalty to his corps: "He's inherited a lot of money and has applied for discharge. This was no time for him to risk his hide fooling around. A rich gendarme is a bad gendarme. But where's he got to?"

"Maybe he's still running," the poacher suggested.

RUSPOLI showed up, much later, after the doctor had arrived and pronounced the wounded not in danger. There were shouts outside; a man ran in and hurriedly asked the few women present to leave. Ruspoli was brought in, walking slowly, supported by two men. His face was smeared with dirt; his tunic was slashed; a trickle of blood ran down his neck. But what was most remarkable was that he wore nothing, absolutely nothing, between the hem of his tunic and the top of his shiny riding boots.

"Somebody cut off his breeches," someone explained. "They wouldn't have slid over those boots. Get him some pants, eh—anything, overalls, a skirt—"

The doctor had examined Ruspoli's head.

"I don't think it's anything—just a bump and a slight laceration. Sure, you can give him a drink."

Ruspoli tossed down three fingers of plum brandy, coughed, shuddered. "I had a narrow escape," he announced. He looked from face to face in the circle leaning toward him. "Did you catch him? No? Well, just as the shot came, I saw somebody rushing down just a few yards from me, and I thought, 'There he goes'—and took off after him."

"You dropped your carbine."

"I did? Yes, I did. Instinctively." Ruspoli drank again. "You see, in a way, it was a personal matter. I did not want to threaten him with a gun." The gendarme stretched out his fists. "Those would have been enough. Well, he must have ducked behind a tree and struck me with a club as I passed, because I don't remember falling." He gesticulated, demonstrating his helplessness. "I was knocked out. I was brought to by a sensation of cold—"

There was an outburst of laughter, quickly checked.

"And although I was still dazed, I saw him bending over me, a knife in his hand. He had lacerated my breeches, slashed my belt, and doubtless intended to mutilate me. But when I stirred, opened my eyes, he got scared and ran off—"

"You recognized Blaise Courtal?" the mayor asked.

"I was still dazed. But I could almost swear to it."

Mayor Vauzeseau straightened and looked around triumphantly.

"That," he pointed out, "should silence those who said I was ridiculous to consider him a dangerous character!"

But it turned out that at almost the exact instant when Gendarme Ruspoli was knocked cold and deprived of his fancy breeches, Blaise Courtal was surrendering at the Gendarmerie in Norteau. According to French law, the testimony of one gendarme outweighs the testimony of two ordinary civilians—but in this case it was the testimony of a houseful of gendarmes against the word of one gendarme, and that one a gendarme who had sent in his resignation.

The mystery did not exist for the village. Everybody knew that Malgache, with or without his pals, had performed that remarkable exploit. But Ruspoli had made charges against Courtal, and could not reverse himself by identifying three men instead of one, could not even admit that he had awakened alone, but minus his breeches. After his resignation was accepted, he left the district for an unknown destination, unwilling to be known as *le gendarme sans-culotte.*

I READ in the newspapers, a few days later, that Blaise Courtal, hero of the tragi-comedy of Saint-Pierre-aux-Bois, had been punished very lightly: thirty days' confinement, eight of them solitary. Knowing Malgache, I am sure that he must have collected those two hundred francs from Madame Courtal, although I never could obtain confirmation, as I never spoke to the man again.

For the mayor, who needed a scapegoat, undertook to fasten the blame for the fiasco on me. I was not even permitted to go to my own quarters, but slept in a room in his house. My father had been sent for at once, and arrived on the ten-thirty train from Bezanval the following morning.

He was bombarded with questions, accused of deceiving French authorities, somehow blamed because he was Swiss and a Swiss rifle had been involved, and ordered to take me away from the village and under no condition to permit me to return, ever.

On the train going home, I tried to make clear that I had not been at fault, that I had acted for the best. But when I would draw breath and comb my aching mind for new evidence, he would resume his puzzled plaint:

"There were fifty boys from the city—"

Shadow Steel

When a German offers an American Occupation officer the formula for a really superior tank armor steel, the answer can be an exciting surprise.

By FRANKLIN M. DAVIS, JR.

EVERY German that's walked into my office for the past two months has wanted his house back, but this guy had a new twist—wholly new.

"Ah, thank you very much, Major Scott. My name's Wentzel," he said. "It's mighty nice of you to let me come in. I know you're plenty busy."

Did my jaw drop? I almost fell out of the chair.

"Okay, Herr Wentzel. Now where did you learn that kind of English?"

Wentzel studied his long slender hands with a slight smile. Then he shot a look at me. "I spent twenty years in San Antonio—"

I held up a hand to interrupt him. "Let me fill in the rest. You spent twenty years in San Antonio, but you came back to Germany around 1938 or so with your twenty years' pay saved, all set to ride Hitler's gravy train." You have to let these Germans know where they stand, especially when they're repatriated from the States and want favors from you.

Wentzel laughed. He had long front teeth and looked something like a forty-year-old Bugs Bunny. "You're very accurate, except you left out the fact that I worked in San Antonio for Stover Steel. But it's plain you've heard tales like mine before."

"Lord, yes, I've heard tales like yours before. Every third German that comes through the door's been in the States or got a relative there. But none of them give me a chill like you birds that spent ten or twenty years there, and then came back here to cash in. Why didn't you stay in the States? Why didn't you take out citizenship papers? Why not stay in the country that gave you a living?" As I keep telling my outside office help, I'll talk to these jokers, because I more or less snatched their houses away from them and they're entitled to an audience, but I don't have to believe everything they say.

Wentzel shrugged.

"Ever bet on the wrong horse, Major?" It was the way he said it that made me be just gladder than all hell the shoe wasn't on the other foot, and it was me in to see Herr Wentzel to ask for my house back from an Occupation Army.

"Never mind the alibis. What do you want? If it's just to ask for your house back, save your breath. The eviction notice told you the Occupation Army needs those houses for TRIAD personnel. And I don't have to tell you who lost the war."

Wentzel sat down very deliberately in the stiff-backed chair I keep for visitors, then leaned toward me until his sharp face was right over my desk. "I want to do you a favor, Major."

I pointed to the door. "Shut it behind you, Wentzel. No diamonds, no silverware, no money, no nothing! I don't bribe." And I reached for a paper in my IN basket.

"No, no, Major, you don't understand!"

"What don't I understand? Dammit, I told you we need your house for TRIAD. Technical Research Industrial and Documentary rates a lot higher around the Occupation Army than some misplaced bluebonnet who came over here for a little fancy carpet-bagging under Adolf. Now scram!"

"If I didn't know better, Major, I'd say you were one tough bozo. But I figure you got a little sense."

"Look, Wentzel, let me straighten you out on something: My secretary says Herr Wentzel is here to ask me something about his house TRIAD took over at umpty-ump Posseltstrasse in Durlach. I let you in: I listen to you long enough to find out we can't do business. No houses back! Hell, the Polish guards out there could have told you that! What else do you want me to do? Clap hands while you give me a few bars of 'Deep in the Heart of Texas?' "

Wentzel changed his tack. "What kind of tanks did you fight in the war?"

"M4 Shermans—but what's that got to do with it?"

"How thick did they have to make the front slope plate of a Sherman before it would turn a German .88 armor-piercing projectile fired at three hundred yards range, at say, an angle of impact of ninety degrees?"

"That's military information. And I wouldn't tell it to you if my life depended on it." An .88 AP round at three hundred yards? It'd take four feet of armor plate—it was impossible—but I'd never tell him that.

Wentzel fiddled with the ashtray on my desk and didn't even apologize when he spilled some of the ashes on my papers. "Your life *may* depend on it, Major."

"Okay, Wentzel. What's the angle? Let's cut out the horseplay and get down to fundamentals. What are you up to?"

MAYBE I do work for the administrative side of TRIAD but I know enough about what we're doing to know that in the technical intelligence side of the Cold War, maybe your life will depend on what some long-haired Kraut is trying to peddle you. But you have to be cagey about it.

Wentzel leaned forward. "Listen to this, Major: You're an old tank soldier—"

"Not so old. I'm only twenty-nine."

"Well, you know what I mean. You've been through the mill. You didn't get that Purple Heart riding a swivel chair."

"The hell I didn't! These things splinter. But go on with your tale."

Wentzel laughed again. Then he drew a shiny silver cigarette case from his pocket, opened it, selected a cigarette, then offered me one.

I shoved my chair back. "Listen, wise guy! Don't try to pull my leg by offering me your damn' cigarettes.

"Tell the driver to run the truck right up to the front doorway."

I know you get 'em on the Black Market and I know what one lousy cigarette is worth to any German. Don't go trying to make any false impressions." The guy was irritating me worse than a chestnut burr under my shirt.

He gave me a sidewise glance as he lit the cigarette with a lighter built into his case. "I just thought you'd like to try a Russian cigarette."

"Russian cigarette?"

"Russki papirosa, I believe Mr. Ossikov calls it."

I stood up. "Now listen, Wentzel. You waltz into my office with some fast shuffle up your sleeve, try to grease me, then jolly me with some veiled cracks about the Russians and Mr. Ossikov, whoever he is. You've got a big thick crust, and I don't like it. Now come to the point before I kick you from here to San Antone."

"Aw, relax, Major. I wouldn't do it if I wasn't as American as you are. Can't you take a rib?"

"And don't be claiming to be an American, either! You're nothing but a wise Heinie who got caught in his own damn' net!"

Wentzel laughed. "If I had any brains, I'd walk right out that door and let you sweat it out, chum. But I'll put my cards right on the table."

"Start dealing."

"I told you I worked for Stover Steel. Know who they are?"

"What did they make? Treasure-chests for smart Krauts?" As a matter of fact, they made armor-plate for tanks. Lots of it.

Two big knots had appeared at each side of Wentzel's jaw. His green eyes darkened. "Please don't go too far, Major."

"Don't get nervous. You were the guy doing all the talking about a little ribbing."

"Okay, okay. Here it is in a nutshell: I'm prepared to give the Americans the samples, test data, and process for an armor plate that's got a Rockwell rating of 100, will let you install a 500-horsepower engine in a forty-ton tank for a power-to-tonnage ratio of 30 and will have a cross-country mobility of forty miles an hour and a road mobility of sixty. What's more, this armor-plate will turn an AP .88 at ninety-degree impact at three hundred yards. Now what do you think of that, Mister Major?"

"Give me a whiff of that opium pipe, you hophead! And what do you want for that, a ninety-nine year lease on the White House?" My God! A tank like that—why, it was revolutionary! It'd put us fifty years ahead of any army in the world! And the Pentagon General Staff could start getting some sleep nights.

Wentzel leaned back in his chair. "Mr. Ossikov will give me a life income better than anything you or I ever heard of, and a house besides."

"Yeah, with the MVD right on your tail, and summer vacations in the uranium mines! Go on, sell it to Ossikov, then."

I didn't mean it, of course. If Wentzel had the dope on this tank, then I ought to turn him over to our experts right away. On the other hand, we don't get our technical intelligence in Germany by force. We get it by straight business methods, and we don't buy pigs in pokes. The Germans'll dicker; they'll dicker all day. They'll tell you the Russians are after their stuff; the Russians are offering them the moon. But clinch the deal? Not on your life. They've all talked to people who've been in the Russian zone; they know what happened to a lot of their V-2 and atomic experts; they know that when they toss in with Joe, they're signing a lease on a life sentence—lots of times on worse than a life sentence. What kind of sentence can you give a guy's mind and spirit? I don't know, but

the Communists do. And the Germans know it.

But Wentzel fooled me. "Major, I'd let Ossikov have it in a minute. But you've called me a smart Heinie, and I think I am." He tapped his finger on my blotter. "I don't bet on the wrong horse twice." He settled back in the chair. "This time I own the horse; and what's more, it's the only horse in the race."

I realized what he meant. And he was right. Any war that we'll see is going to be clinched on the ground—and you can forget about atom bombs and everything else, because they'll contribute but they'll never clinch—and it'll be clinched with tanks. I haven't forgotten air power, either. You've got to have it, and that's one of the big lessons from World War II. But here's the point: you've got to destroy the enemy's ability to maintain an army, and *you've got to destroy his troops in the field.*

And if Wentzel had this tank, he owned the horse, all right. And there wasn't any race. With Wentzel's tank, the race was as good as over.

It was obvious Wentzel was angling. And I couldn't just grab him and beat the information out of him. I leaned back in my chair and put my arms behind my head. "So you own the horse, and there's nobody else in the race. Maybe so. But why come to me? I'm only a deck-hand around here—you know that; the sign on the door says this is the Administrative Office. I feed these guys, keep 'em warm, keep gas in the cars, all that, including running them ten miles into the French Zone to play golf. But all the brains are upstairs. Go up and see Mr. Silverthorn in the Automotive Section. Or better yet, go on up to Heidelberg and talk to our Ordnance people. They're the ones who'll have to build this dreamboat of yours."

"There are about eighteen reasons why I came to you, Major Scott, and I'll recite just one of them: You control my house."

"I don't control your house! I'm just an agent. I told you I was a deck-hand around here. If you've got something to peddle, take it to the people upstairs. If getting your house back is part of the deal, they'll let me know. Then I'll derequisition it. But don't tell me I control your house, because I don't. I took it over, sure. But that was just one of the nineteen thousand jobs I have to do around here. You don't think I liked kicking fifteen hundred Germans out in the cold right at Christmas-time, do you? But what do you want me to do? Put up pup-tents for Americans over here? Use your head, you're so smart."

"Don't get excited, Major. And forgive my approach. But I had to catch your interest. Here's why I came to you. I can't do business with anyone without my notes. You can let me get them out of that house, can't you?"

"Nope. You were supposed to take your kitchen utensils and your bedding; everything else stays."

"Look, Major. Be reasonable. I'm not talking about furniture, or anything simple. I'm talking about the notes and drawings for the best tank in the world. But I need the notes!"

"I thought you said you had everything on it."

"Dammit, Major, I do. I can demonstrate this to you, prove that everything I say is true. But I need the papers. You don't make this stuff over a bonfire like you were toasting marshmallows, you know; it's an entirely new departure in gas-carbonized steel, and—"

"Look, Wentzel, suppose you quit soaking up my heat. Take your fancy process up to Ordnance or to Mr. Silverthorn. It's not my department."

"Major Scott, if you don't go with me on this, I'll walk out of this office and you nor anyone else in this Army will never see or hear of that tank again until it's looking down your throat, tying you in knots, and cutting you to ribbons, all while your stuff is bouncing off it like so many peas out of a bean-blower!"

"Oh, knock it off, Wentzel. You're mixing your metaphors. And it's beans out of a bean-blower, not peas. Why the hell are you so anxious to rope me in on it? Just tell me that!"

"Dammit, I'll tell you why! Because you're the Army officer right here in Karlsruhe that's handled my house, that's why. I need those notes to talk about the process! Besides, I won't deal with Silverthorn or any other civilian representative of American industry. You know what happened to Spanholz, don't you?"

"No, Mr. Bones, I don't know what happened to Spanholz. What did happen to Spanholz?"

"He walked into TRIAD with a patented automotive fuel process. Bingo! Silverthorn got the process, and what did Spanholz get? The back of everybody's hand!"

I leaned forward on the desk. "Patented process, my eye! Any process developed from 1941 on has no international patent rights! That was the Potsdam Agreement, because nobody knew for sure where you Germans stole all your stuff. And another thing—TRIAD hasn't lifted an original pre-1941 patent out of here yet. They're all copies. And what was Spanholz promised? Nothing he didn't get, if you'll examine the record. And I'll bet you your fancy tank against my 1942 Chevrolet on that, Wentzel! Go on up to Ordnance. They got officers up there."

Wentzel stood up, put both hands on my desk and leaned across at me. *"There isn't time to go to Ordnance; there may not even be time to get out to Durlach!"*

"Well, stupid, what did you do? Shoot off your face to Ossikov like you shot it off to me, so now he knows the whole score, and you're afraid he's going to steal it? Baloney! There isn't a Russian agent within a hundred miles of here."

Wentzel wiped his face. "Major, I do not know for sure how much they know. But listen, you've got to believe me: I was working on this process when I was with Stover; it was just my pet laboratory experiment then. In 1939 I was deported as an alien national. I brought my notes with me. Then I go to work for Krupp, see? I work with a guy named Hagenschmidt—Heinz Hagenschmidt. I am a research chief with Krupp. Hagenschmidt is my assistant. I—"

"We got all Krupp's stuff; we got it from the British. And there was never anything as fancy as you say you got."

"Major, please let me finish! I didn't get this thing doped out until April of 1945, and—"

"So you take until 1949 to come around and peddle it to us. Where'd you go in the meantime? Moscow?"

"Major, on April 11th in 1945 I have the thing licked. Our test plate has come through a hundred per cent. Hagenschmidt and I are dancing around in the laboratory. We have the new metal. We can send our tank against the—uh—enemy as soon as we produce it, and—"

"Yeah, go on, I can guess the rest. Some beautiful blonde comes in and steals your notes."

"Worse, Major. God knows how many bombs hit the factory, and Hagenschmidt and I are dancing on a rubbish heap ten minutes after we have the solution."

"So what? Why couldn't you begin right away on it again?"

"Major, it took me seven years to get the thing by April of '45, seven years in the best steel labs there are in the world. How can I build all that overnight?"

"I dunno. You were the guy talking about time a minute ago."

"After the bombing I come to Karlsruhe to work in my own place. Hagenschmidt goes to Berlin to confer with Wehrmacht Ordnance. You know the rest; Berlin is doomed even then."

"What happened to this Hagenschmidt?"

"I do not know for sure. But yesterday, just yesterday, a man comes to my door on Hilda Promenade, to the fancy room the *Wohnungsamt* housing office has put me in after I'm

booted out of my house. He says he is Herr Niemand—an odd name, if you think it over. Niemand means *'No One'* in German, you know. When he is inside my room, he asks me if I knew Hagenschmidt.

"I say, *'Vielleicht*—perhaps.' "

" 'He wants you to come work with him.' He has an odd accent.

" 'Where?'

" 'Away. Way off.'

" 'No dice. I'm sticking right here!'

"This joker is looking my room over, and he's looking me over pretty close too. Finally he says: 'Herr Wentzel, I'll state my business very bluntly. My name's Ossikov—' And right away I knew what that meant!"

"What did it mean?"

"That the Russians had Hagenschmidt, see? And he told them about *Schattenstahl.* That's what we called my steel. Shadow steel."

"What else did this Ossikov say?"

"That his colleagues were prepared to pay me the equivalent of 150,000 marks a year—that's fifty thousand dollars, just to save you figuring it out—with a house of my own and my own laboratory if I'd move to work with them. He even offered me a retainer—which I didn't take—and gave me some cigarettes and a little food."

"Why didn't you just take his offer of the house and lab?"

"Because I want a better offer."

"Why come to me, then? Go talk to the people who make the offers."

"Major, I told you I owned the horse. And I'm going to keep it. I don't go anywhere until I have my notes right with me, all the time. You can either put me back in my house and give me an adequate guard, or you can move my notes and stuff out of there. And I'd a helluva lot rather move out somewhere with the notes. If that joker Ossikov is sharp enough to find me in that hole in the wall where I'm living now, he's smart enough to see I didn't have the notes there, and he'll sure as hell have enough sense to find out where I was living. He may even be out there snooping around now. Maybe even stealing the notes."

"Listen, Wentzel, I don't know how bulky those notes and so forth are, but if you couldn't shag them out of there, this joker Niemand or Ossikov or whoever it is isn't going to do it, not with that Polish guard right on the block."

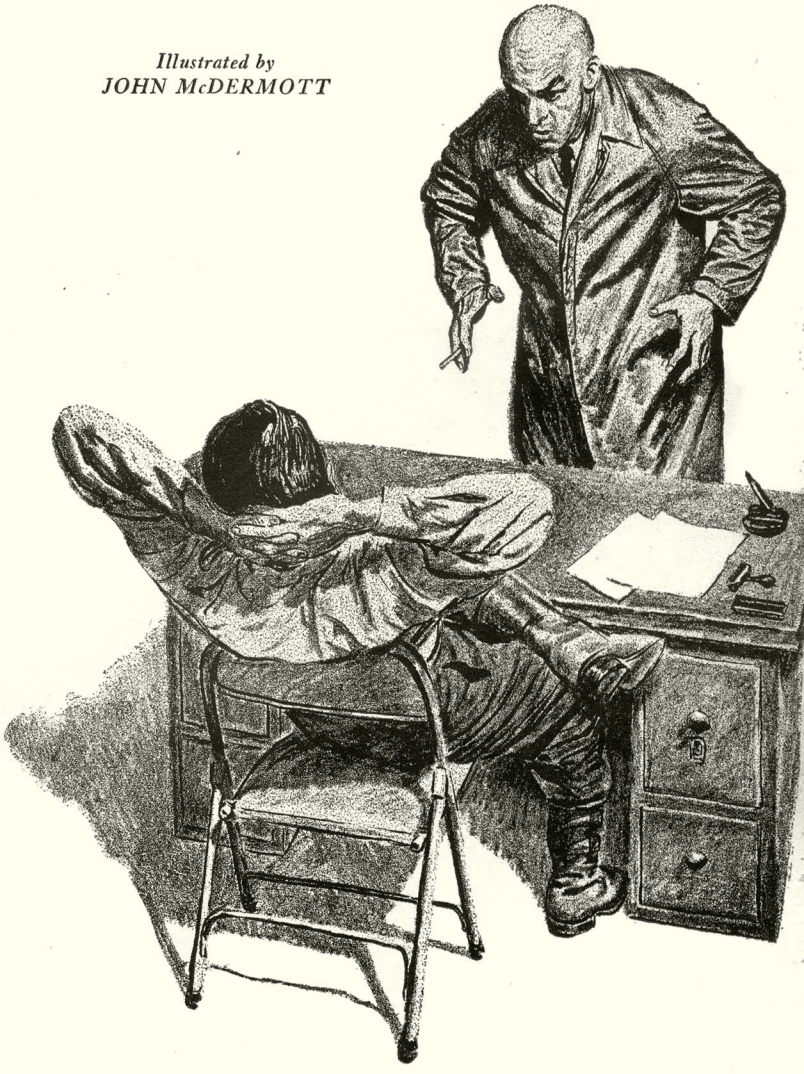
"*Touché,* Major. I couldn't have got them out of there, but I didn't try it, either. They take a whole filing-case, about shoulder-high, like that three-drawer job you got there."

"Two-and-a-half ton truck would handle it, won't it?"

"Oh, yes."

"Now look, Wentzel! I'm going to go out there with you with a truck, and we're going to get those notes.

Illustrated by
JOHN McDERMOTT



"Major Scott, if you don't go with me on this, you'll never see that tank again until it's looking down your throat."

Then we'll bring them in here and lock them in the vault, and we'll put you in protective custody somewhere. And then I'll sic the Constabulary and everybody else on this guy Ossikov or whoever he is. And if you're pulling my leg, you'll wish you'd never walked into the office. Do you understand?"

"I understand. But do you understand something?"

"What do you mean?"

"I want you to know that I'll be getting something out of this."

"Getting? I'll tell you what you're getting from me, brother. Nothing but a trip to Durlach and back again. If there's any merit to your tank, you've got a chance—and notice I said a chance, not a ticket—to go to the States again. But that's all. If you don't like it, okay. Go peddle your brains to Ossikov."

"Major, you don't mean that. Maybe Ossikov is shooting square and maybe he's not. But I'm not playing sucker for anybody. If I don't get what I want out of you people, Ossikov'll get the tank, and I'll take a chance on those uranium-mine summer vacations! So don't go getting tough with me. I wasn't stuffing you full of feathers when I told you I was doing you a favor."

"What do you want me to do? Reserve you a suite in the Waldorf-Astoria? I'm doing all I can right now in the face of all these dizzy restrictions you're throwing up, like not talking to anyone without the notes,

Wentzel slumped to the floor with a moan. "That a good enough lesson for you?" Ossikov asked me casually.

not talking to Silverthorn, all that stuff. If you don't like what I'm telling you, go on, shove off. What do you want from us that's better than fifty thousand a year and a house in Moscow?"

"You'll see when the time comes; I just want it known right from the start that this is a sale, not a gift. Now do you want to get that truck?"

"Yeah, I do. But first give me a description of Niemand or Ossikov or whoever it is."

"I'll give it to you, but you'll never catch him. You can't put check points on every road in and out of Karlsruhe."

"Let's not be criticizing the Occupation. What's this guy look like?"

I dialed the Constabulary operations officer. When I had him on the phone, I said: "Wait a minute, Baldy —okay, Wentzel, shoot."

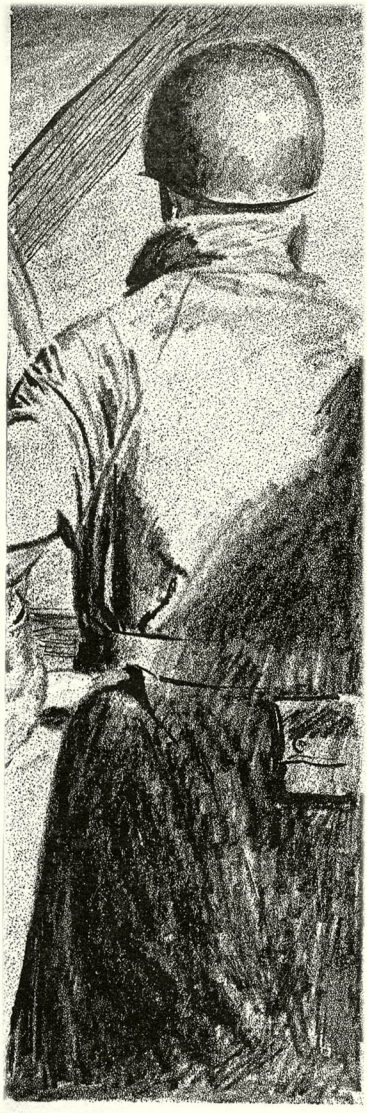
"Six feet, blond hair, blue eyes, age about thirty-five, thin scar about two inches long on his right cheek, wearing a black leather raincoat and a black soft felt hat."

"Look, Baldy, pass the word to pick this guy up, will you?" I gave him the description. "Hell, yes, I know he looks like half the male population of Germany, but try to get him. What for? He's a foreign agent, a spy."

I hung up, and Wentzel's lip was curling. "They'll never get him. They can forge papers, duck checkpoints, everything else."

"Never mind the gloom. Let's go get a truck." I walked out of my office to the big lobby of our building. We've even got potted palms, and all we need is a guy wearing a derby making like a house detective to have you think you're in a third-rate hotel. And that's what I think we're running some of the time at that. I spoke to Ace Donovan, the reception officer. "Ace, grab me a two-and-a-half, will you? I want to run out to Durlach."

Ace turned to his ready-bench where his drivers wait between trips. He rattled some German at the single occupant. We use German drivers for all our vehicles, and as long as you know the German words for "Slower! Slower!" and "Put on the brakes!"



I didn't say anything.

you're okay. They make New York hackies look as if they were running scooterbikes.

After the German on the bench mumbled a reply, Ace said: "Have to call the motor pool, Major. I'll get you one in a few minutes."

"Okay, Ace. We'll be waiting outside."

I took Wentzel out to the big parking-area around our building. It's all wired in and we have a very fancy sentry box for the gate guard. Have to. Lots of important stuff in our shop. In fact, if Wentzel's tank was what he claimed, the colonel that commanded TRIAD would wire the word to Washington, and the President would know about it after the news shuffled through just about two offices. That's the level we operate on.

A big canvas-backed two-and-a-half-ton truck finally eased up to the gate. "Wentzel, none of these Krauts learned German where I did. Go ask that driver if that's my truck, while I go back to my office a minute. I almost forgot something."

I HUSTLED back into my office and fished my pistol belt and .45 out of the field safe. I buckled it on and felt that big heavy automatic sagging at my waist.

Wentzel was in the cab of the truck, and when I climbed in he said: "That thing real?"

"Sure it's real. You don't want to take a chance on anybody hijacking your *billet-doux,* do you?"

Wentzel directed the driver out to Durlach, and we moved down Karlstrasse, past the fingerlike monument to the 1st Baden Dragoons and their efforts in 1870 and 1914. I noticed that where somebody had written "Berlin 1944" with chalk on its base, there was now an additional note, "Karlsruhe 1949," a crack at the current food shortage that was still plaguing Germany. We detoured the blocked major-damage area by turning into Kaiserstrasse when the white-helmeted Military Government policeman waved us past a fat little trolley car inching through the rubble heaps that lined the street.

Spurting down Hapsburger Allee, we passed the little art store that sold such fine silhouettes and went on through the ruined Karlsruhe University grounds to whistle around the sharp curve into Karlplatz. We scattered a couple of German peddlers, hawking desiccated vegetables from creaky barrows, and just missed clipping the low chain fence around the pyramid marking the grave of old Karl, an early Duke who settled centuries ago in the tiny Rhine River hamlet that now teemed under the name Karlsruhe—Karl's Rest.

When the driver was heading toward Durlach along the long straight extension of Durlacherstrasse and we'd bumped over the damaged Autobahn overpass to squeeze through the medieval streets of Durlach proper, I asked Wentzel, "Your place is Number 22 Posseltstrasse, isn't it?"

"Yeah, that's right."

"That's the big place, flush against the hill, with the two stone pillars marking the drive?"

"That's the one. Made out of fieldstone."

"That's assigned to some of our Electronics people, but they're either off on trips or working in town, so you handle the *Putzfrau.* Just tell her that I'm going to get something out, and that she's not to say anything to anybody. But I don't remember any filing-case in there, and I've been all through every one of these houses."

"Have you been in all the cellars too?"

"No, only to check some of the furnaces. So that's why we didn't see it; it's in the cellar."

We were going up under the bare elms of Bergwaldstrasse, circling the base of the high chocolate-drop berg, the vineyard-covered hill that rose abruptly out of Durlach and provided a backdrop for some of the nicest houses around Karlsruhe. TRIAD had taken over six streets in Durlach, on the side nearest the woods that rolled in gentle swells into the Black Forest stretching south through the French Zone to Switzerland. As I passed the billeting office where a couple of my sergeants handled the squads of cleaning-women, firemen, and utilities experts we needed to maintain our Durlach community, I said: "Tell this driver to take it easy going up the street here. I've told these Polish guards to nab anybody doing over twenty. Too many kids around."

Wentzel rattled at the driver and he slowed the truck perceptibly just as a blue-uniformed Polish guard glowered at us from under his blue Army helmet liner. The Occupation Army maintains these guards on a civilian-watchman status and outfits them in GI uniforms dyed blue. They're efficient, military, and the Germans are scared to death of them. We use them to patrol our residential area, and even the handful we have for the six streets keeps petty thievery and anti-Occupation nuisances right down to zero.

WE pulled to a halt in front of 22 Posseltstrasse. The house was big; a great tiled roof, twinkling with snow-capped dormer windows, sat benignly on top of the gray fieldstones rising in state from a broad snow-covered lawn. A Polish guard, his carbine at shoulder, stood at the two pillars marking the entrance to the drive that swung up to the big porte-cochere. He stared at us stolidly, then gave me a rifle salute, left hand cutting across his body to touch the stock of his carbine, then dropping to his side. They aren't supposed to salute—technically they're civilians, but they like the outward signs of a military existence.

"Tell the driver to run the truck right up to the front doorway." We eased between the pillars and the Polish guard moved slowly away.

We halted under the porte-cochere and I got out, followed by Wentzel, who stood looking up and down the front of his house.

"What's the matter?" I ribbed. "Expect to see cracks in the walls and a leaky roof already?"

"No," he murmured, "not that. I was looking for signs of forced entry."

"That boy on the gate takes care of that," I told him as I jabbed at the bell. I could hear its deep tones muffled somewhere inside, but nobody came to the door.

"That's funny. The *Putzfrau* ought to be here." I poked the bell again. No answer.

I looked at Wentzel. "Well, give me the key you probably held out on us," I said. "Otherwise I'll have to go back to the billeting office for one."

Wentzel pulled a chain from his pocket and selected a slim key from the bunch hooked on the end of the chain. He didn't act very embarrassed. "Major, I better tell that driver to swing around to the back of the house. We'll have to haul that filing-case out of the cellar bulkhead."

"Okay, suit yourself."

He called to the driver and had him move the truck around behind the house. Then he unlocked the door and we went inside.

The house was dark and gloomy and the big living-room was crowded with overbearing antique furniture, carved and heavy. Wentzel, without so much as a look around him, started through the kitchen which opened off the front corridor. I noticed there was a woman's coat on the enameled table in the kitchen, and figured the *Putzfrau* must have stepped out for a minute, leaving the door locked. That was characteristic. Germans never leave anything unlocked.

The cellar door was locked, but Wentzel took care of that.

"Remind me to have the police come around for those extra keys of yours, Wentzel."

"If I get these papers, Major, I'll give you the keys."

We started down the dusty cellar stairs, dodging mops and brooms along the way. As we descended into the dank black cellar, my nose wrinkling at the strong odor of rotting potatoes that seems to float out of every German cellar, Wentzel flipped a switch. No light came.

"That's funny," I said. "We put bulbs in all these cellars a week ago. Damn' if I don't think the firemen are stealing them."

"Never mind," Wentzel said at the foot of the stairs. "I'll use my lighter."

The feeble flame of his lighter split the darkness and we edged our way along the dripping cellar wall to the coal-bin.

"Here's why you never saw that filing-cabinet," Wentzel told me. He lifted one of the boards lining the side of the coalbin next the wall and I saw that the side of the bin had been built with tongue-and-groove supports so that when he lifted out the whole side of the bin plank by plank while I held the lighter, I could see a small steel door let into the wall.

Using another key from his chain, he opened the little door, reached in to snap on a dim bulb, then stepped inside. "Come in, Major," he said, holding the door open for me. I handed his lighter back to him and went in.

The tiny overhead bulb showed a small room, some ten feet square, with a high ceiling. Dust was everywhere, and the walls were wet with condensed moisture. A small table, littered with papers and dirt, was in one corner, a rickety chair tilted against it. Gleaming in the far corner stood a filing-case. It was a little over five feet high, with three drawers. A stout iron bar, secured by a hasp and padlock to the top and bottom of the case, ran down through the handles of each drawer.

"There it is, Major. My little *Schattenstahl.*"

"No. *My* shadow steel." A dulcet voice behind made us whirl.

Smiling in the doorway stood a man in a long black leather raincoat, a soft black felt hat on his head. There was a thin scar on his right cheek. A mean-looking little Walther pistol was in his hand.

"*Ossikov!*" Wentzel gasped.

"Nobody," the man mimicked. "You, Major, unbuckle that pistol. Toss it over here! Snap it up!" He had a thick accent.

I unbuckled my weapon. That pistol of his looked nasty. He was an ordinary-looking joker, but I didn't dare do anything more than look at him. What a sap I'd been! To come out after something like that shadow steel with nobody but myself and Wentzel! And where the hell was that Polish guard?

"All right, Dmitri." Ossikov now stepped aside, and the Polish guard stepped through the door. An evil smirk was on his brutish face. He shoved me with a heavy hand and I bounced off the wall. I shook my head. This didn't make sense. The Pole bent to heave on the filing-case. It didn't budge.

Ossikov stepped through the door. "Wentzel, open that filing-case."

"Open it yourself. You want it bad enough."

Lazily Ossikov raised his pistol. His arm came down like a cobra striking. The pistol mashed into Wentzel's face. Blood rushed; Wentzel slumped to the floor with a moan. Dmitri giggled.

"That a good enough lesson for you?" Ossikov asked me casually.

I didn't say anything.

Ossikov prodded Wentzel with his foot; then, holding the pistol and his eyes on me, he leaned against the filing-case. He pushed. It didn't move. He muttered something in an outlandish language to Dmitri. Dmitri ducked out the door. I heard his feet pounding up the cellar stairs outside the little room.

Ossikov gestured the pistol at me. "Find his keys. Open the filing-case."

I stooped over and lifted out Wentzel's key chain. I had to unfasten it from where it was clipped to his belt. I could feel his ribs moving slightly, so I knew he was alive. The keys felt heavy in my hand. I held them out to Ossikov.

He backed away a little. "Find the right key. Open that case. I want to know everything's there."

"What do you care?" I ventured. "You're not going to get it very far."

"I'll get it to the French Zone in your truck, and that's far enough. Now open the case and shut up!" *Crunch!* He jarred my teeth with a smashing kick to my knee. Pain burned my leg. I fumbled for the keys; tried one in the top padlock. It didn't work. Tried another. Not the right one.

"Look at the keyhole on the lock, you American dog! Then pick a key that looks like it fits."

Okay, you thick Russki, I thought to myself, *You'll eat that crack.*

Wentzel stirred on the floor. A soft moan came from him. Ossikov spit at him. "Hurry up!" he said. "I haven't got all day!"

I finally found the right key and the padlocks opened. Carefully I lifted the iron bar up through the handles. I was thinking what the contents of this filing-case would mean to any country that could get the notes. So I didn't just pull that bar up. I kept my hands close together and I slid the bar up through my fingers. Then I was holding it like it was a baseball bat. I fumbled with it, as if I was having trouble clearing the top drawer handle.

Zzzzzzzz! I swung the iron bar. I got a line drive right across Ossikov's skull. *Tunk!* It made a noise like a dropped cantaloupe. He collapsed on the floor. I dived for his pistol, got it, picked up my own. I stuck my head close to the door, listening for Dmitri's feet banging down the stairs. I figured he must have gone for the truck-driver to help with the filing-case. I listened again. No sound. Gently I closed the door. Then I turned to look at Ossikov. He was out, blood welling from a deep cut on his head. Wentzel was in better shape. His nose looked as if it was broken—swollen and out of place—but he could sit up when I helped him.

"I got him, Wentzel. Can you keep an eye on him while I go after Dmitri?"

Wentzel wobbled his head on his neck, then flopped back against me.

"Wentzel!"

He stirred.

"Pull yourself together, for God's sake!"

He nodded. I thrust the Walther into his hand.

Carefully I eased the door open. I stared out. All I could see was blackness. I pushed the door wider. More blackness. I stepped carefully into the dark. I didn't dare light a match. I stared at the blackness, trying to pierce it. *I couldn't find the stairs!* My foot scraped on some coal. I froze, listening.

I heard feet on the stairs.

Hastily I stepped back into the coalbin, beyond the little doorway. Dmitri was passing within inches of me—I could smell his sour unwashed body.

I reached out my pistol to stick it in his ribs. Not soon enough. He turned with a yell and charged straight at me. His carbine clattered on the floor. I fired. *Whangggg!* The noise rang around the cellar. I missed him. He hit me like an express train. We were rolling in the coal, the lumps digging into my back as I fought to get a grip on him, to bring my pistol into him. The gun flew from my hand. His heavy overcoat slipped from my fingers and his huge arms grappled for my throat. I swung a leg around his, gave a kick, rolled sideways on the coal.

"Wentzel! Wentzel!" I tried to yell, but my voice seemed faint and faraway. I got one arm under Dmitri's chin, but he grabbed my hand and yanked my arm across my own chest, almost dislocating my shoulder. My other hand beat on the floor, grappling for a lump of coal, the pistol, anything to beat this beast. I kicked against his leg. It was like kicking granite. His fingers dug into my throat. He squeezed—and squeezed. . . . I couldn't breathe. I could feel my throat bulging inward, inward—*he was killing me!* My hand brushed against a lump of coal; I grabbed it, reached up, jabbed it into his eye, twisted it, hard. He screamed. I drove it into his eye. He jumped up, then tripped over my leg. I was on him, pounding that lump of coal at his head until he stopped flopping and lay still.

My throat was on fire, and I was soaked with sweat. I felt as if I was standing on a high mountain top, trying to get the cool sweet air into my lungs in great gulps. My eyes felt sticky and as I opened them wider to look for more of that wonderful air, there was Wentzel in the doorway, his face looking like a Halloween mask.

"Wentzel," I croaked, "where in hell were you? That big baboon almost finished me!"

***He squeezed—and squeezed. I couldn't breathe*—he was killing me!**

"My God, I came out here as soon as you yelled! But you didn't need any help from me."

"Well, I do now. Find something to tie these birds up with."

He moved into the darkness of the cellar and came back with some clothesline. We trussed Dmitri up without his making a move. Then we tied up Ossikov.

As we ran the rope around Ossikov's ankles, there was a step outside the door. We jumped, but it was only the driver.

He said something to Wentzel, and Wentzel began to laugh, his laughter going up the register until he almost screeched. The driver looked at him, amazement on his face.

"Wentzel!" I shoved him. "Don't blow your top! What's so damn' funny?"

"This driver wants to know where's the stuff he's supposed to help with down here! *Now* he asks!" He started to laugh again, more moderately this time.

There isn't much more to it. Ossikov and Dmitri were after the shadow steel for Joe. Ossikov had been watching Wentzel and Dmitri had been watching the house. Ossikov figured the stuff was there, so after he saw Wentzel go into TRIAD, he had Dmitri conk the regular Polish guard and take his place, just in case. We found the guard and the *Putzfrau* tied up and nearly suffocated in a second-floor closet.

The shadow steel is the stuff, all right. That filing-cabinet caused plenty of excitement around TRIAD, and in Washington, too.

And as for Wentzel, he wasn't so hard to do business with, once he found we were playing square with him.

"Wentzel," I said, when some of the various conferences on that filing-case were over, "what's the Government giving you that's so much better than all those *Russki* rubles and that house in Moscow?"

"That's easy, Major: A chance to work on the development of the new tanks, and a place in San Antonio."

Texas Chamber of Commerce please copy.

A Good Cop

Detective Joe Chance walked into the room and looked at the body. Murder, he thought, was always an odorous thing. It affected his olfactory nerve; it was as though he could smell the passion of the killer in the room where the deed was committed. He felt, at first sight, an overwhelming anger and desire for revenge upon anyone who would cut off the existence of a breathing person. That was why he was a detective, he supposed, somewhat wearily. He had been up late the night before and this was the end of a hard day, close to evening; and he had known Mrs. Needle.

He had known Horace Needle too, years before, when Horace was a great confidence man. Mrs. Needle had been younger then, and very pretty. After Horace did his bit up the river, Mrs. Needle had stuck by him. . . . And Horace had gone straight after that, so far as Joe Chance ever knew. Horace had died of cancer, in his bed.

Now the little woman who had been his wife lay upon the floor of her home in the neighborhood known as the Neck. Her head was sadly misshapen. It was another "blunt instrument" job. Her short hair was disarranged and bloody. She wore a nightgown and a thin robe. The body was pitifully thin in death, although Joe Chance did not remember Mrs. Needle as a skinny woman.

The specialists were coming with their cameras and dusting boxes and flash-bulbs. Joe Chance respected the Lab as much as anyone did, but it seemed a shame to make a spectacle of poor Mrs. Needle.

Captain Marble said: "This oughta be down your alley. Didn't you come from this part of town. Didn't you pound a beat here?"

Joe said: "I was raised here." He kept looking at the body. He had his sketch-block in his hand. He roughed in the details of the room.

The furniture was not very greatly disturbed—only a small table apparently out of place, a chair upside-down.

Marble said: "Some thief; he comes in; she gets up; he slugs her; down she goes. He scrams—knocks over a chair, runs into that little table."

The house was a two-flat, an up-and-downstairs modest arrangement. Alice Temple lived above. She would be coming home soon. It had been a long time since Joe Chance had dated Alice. She must be about thirty now.

It was worse about murder, when people he knew were involved. Joe could never get used to it. He had been twelve years on the Force, and he still was not hardened, not underneath. On the outside he seemed impersonal, hardboiled; but inside he was never accustomed to it. He hated these things which tore aside the wall of privacy which people had a right to build around their lives.

He said to Marble: "It doesn't add up right. What has this joint got in it to make a break-and-enter man take a chance? She was hit hard—and only once. No attack—the M.E. man was sure of that. And look at the way she lies there."

Marble said: "She was Mrs. Horace Needle, wasn't she?" Marble had a memory. "How do you know what she had? Needle swindled people for years. How do you know he didn't have a slop of dough when he died?"

"Could be," said Joe. There was no use arguing with the Captain. Precinct men knew their neighborhoods pretty well. It just happened that Joe knew this one better than Marble, who had not been brought up on the Neck.

"You'll be in charge," said Marble. "Count on me."

"Sure," said Joe. He was thinking about Horace Needle. The man had gone straight, all right. But he had died three years ago, and Mrs. Needle had lived on in the house without visible means of support except the rent Alice Temple paid; and that was not enough, Joe suddenly thought. Maybe Marble had something. . . . He finished his sketch, and saw Alice coming from the bus stop.

He went out and walked toward her, thinking to alleviate the shock of the news. She had not changed an iota, he thought. His heart pounded a little—neither of them had married after the rift. He had heard that she was going steady with Bo Mandell, but so far as Joe knew, she was not engaged. She had always been pretty and shapely, and it was a wonder she had never married. As he came close to her, he saw that already there was something like fear and dread in her gray eyes.

He said: "Take it easy, Alice. It's a bad thing."

"The police cars—something bad?"

"Mrs. Needle," he said. It was poor police procedure, but he had to ease her into it. "Someone broke in last night and killed her. . . . Take it easy, Alice."

It was strange that her eyes did not change. He became sharply aware of this, of something static in her. As though she was haunted, he thought. He went with her toward the house.

Then he saw Bo Mandell approaching, with his friend and roommate Danny Pell. Bo was manager of the Neck Grill nowadays. There had been a time when Bo Mandell was a shill for Needle; he had almost gone up with Horace, but his youth and inconclusive evidence, and Needle's protestations that the boy was innocent, had saved him. Bo had reformed too. Bo was all right, Joe Chance thought.

Danny Pell made a little book, but with discretion. Danny had deep-set eyes and a long face and was very quiet and dapper, a tall man, lean and smart. He and Bo were old pals. Both men had skirted the edge of the law often enough, but neither were criminal types. Joe knew all about them.

Alice was saying: "Mrs. Needle—she was so kind and gentle." She reeled a little, going up the steps. Bo and Danny both jumped to aid her, and Joe fell back, watching. There was something he did not like, something wrong. He had known it when he walked into the room where Mrs. Needle lay.

That was experience. Little things, subtle things, did not ring true, did not fit where they were supposed to fit. That was what made Joe Chance a good detective. He was a small man for a cop, slight and just tall enough to pass the exams. He was the sort of fellow nobody notices in a crowd, a trait he carefully cultivated. They thought a lot of Joe Chance down at Homicide, where politics did not enter.

He fell back, scanning the house. It was neighbored by two others. There was a high stoop and a semi-basement, and Mrs. Needle had occupied the first floor and basement, and Alice lived upstairs. There were very narrow alleys each side. The roof of the brick house to the west topped the Needle roof by about eight feet. The other house was a full story higher.

Joe Chance went into the brick house. He spoke to the occupant,

A good cop has ugly situations to handle, and tough questions to answer. Who, for instance, would murder an old woman like Mrs. Needle—and why?

by JOEL REEVE

It was another "blunt instrument" job. The body was pitifully thin in death.

and found a ladder and climbed up through a trapdoor onto the flat roof and went to the edge. There were a few scratches which were inconclusive, but which satisfied him. He jumped over onto the Needle house. There was another wooden trapdoor. It was unfastened. He shrugged. Now he knew the *modus operandi* of the killer. It was an elementary thing; any rookie would have discovered the same. Furthermore, it was an item which could not be proved in court.

He went inside the house. The word had come down; he was to take charge of the case. He went into the dining-room. Alice was sitting at the table, her face buried in her hands. She had identified the body, the uniformed man said. Danny and Bo were on either side of her. Both looked taut and angry.

Danny said: "Joe—they took her in there and made her—"

Bo Mandell said nothing. He had prematurely gray hair and brown skin and white teeth. He was a handsome man with blue eyes which questioned Joe without words.

Joe said: "I'm sorry, Alice. Routine business. Did she have any kin that you know about?"

Alice raised her head. There were lines at the corners of her red lips. "She had no relatives, Joe. She was alone—and lonely."

Joe nodded. "Do you know anything, Alice?"

She shook her head. The fear had deepened in her, he knew. He asked her the questions he had to ask. She answered in such a low voice that he said: "We'd better go upstairs. I'm not supposed to question you in front of people, anyway."

Danny said: "You're going to pester her now?"

"I want the killer," said Joe. "Alice wants him caught." He looked at Bo and asked: "Do you know anything?"

"I—we were friends, you know," said Bo Mandell.

Marble came in. He said sharply: "You were around here last night, Mandell. You were seen. The neighborhood check turned you up. You often came here in the daytime, when Miss Temple was at work."

The wheels began turning in Joe Chance's head. He said: "Bo, you'll have to answer questions." The morgue basket bumped the jamb going out through the living-room into the hall. Joe said: "In there. I have two men coming down right away. . . . You wait here, Danny. You may have to corroborate Bo's statement."

The two men were stonily silent. Joe took Alice's arm. They went up the stairs to her apartment. She had furnished the rooms very well, he thought. Good, comfortable furniture, nice prints on the walls. She was an extremely neat girl; there was no dust, no disarray in any room.

She sat on a straight chair and said; "Bo—they'll be hot after Bo. Because of that—old thing."

Joe said: "You think a lot of Bo?"

"Bo and Danny—they've been my friends." She looked straight at him. "I've been lonely too."

"Mrs. Needle—Bo and Danny—and you." He walked around the room. There was something fatally wrong with it—not with the room, but the murder. He felt it more strongly every moment. It was coming close to people he knew. . . . It was coming closer to Alice.

"We were the lonely ones—all of us," she said. "We stuck by each other. Bo and Danny—"

"Both in love with you?" he asked quietly.

She flushed. "How would you measure a thing like that? You can't expect me to answer."

"I'm a cop," he said.

"I know. You're hard." Her tone was bitter. "You never forget nor forgive."

He was silent. His heart pounded in a way which he remembered. He had thought it was all done, but he could remember now how it had

"I'm sorry, Alice. Routine business. Did she have any kin that you know of?"

pounded, and how he had suffered after their quarrel. A silly argument—he could not even remember the cause of it. He wondered if she could recall it. Women generally could, he thought grimly.

She said: "Joe—I was with Bo last night. Danny didn't know it. Bo and I walked—until quite late. Then he brought me home, and I came straight up here. She—was she dead then?"

"What time was it?"

"Oh—midnight—a little after."

Joe said: "Mrs. Needle was killed between twelve and two, so far as we know now."

Alice shuddered. "Bo—he'll be in trouble. Can't you help him?"

Joe said: "I'll try. I'll want to see you again, Alice, when your mind is clearer. And—get the time straight. On the minute." He watched her eyes. The fear was growing. He had no wish to drive her to hysteria. She was in it, all right, somehow or other. Not as an agent, perhaps, but she had guilty knowledge. He was sure of it. He made himself be all cop, and went downstairs.

MACY and Trimble had Bo in the living-room. Marble was there. Macy and Trimble were old-timers, with heavy hands and heavy minds. Joe outranked them, and they had no love for him. Marble was saying: "If Horace Needle had a cache of dough and you wanted it— You admit you got no alibi. You're in the soup, Bo. Why don't you talk?"

Bo said nothing. He was too experienced to affirm or deny. He sat tight and kept his mouth shut. Joe said: "What's this?"

"He visited her often. She had more money than she should've had," said Marble stubbornly.

Macy said: "This here is a wise guy."

Trimble said: "If we had him downtown in the basement—"

Joe looked at Bo. "No alibi, Mandell?"

"No motive, either," shrugged Bo. "I'll want a lawyer."

Marble said: "If there was a lot of the dough, and he figured it was part his because he worked with Needle—"

"Not proved," said Joe. "We can't hold him. You can go, Mandell; but stick around. We'll see you again."

Mandell nodded. He rose, looked hesitantly at the stairs in the hall which led up to Alice's apartment, then went out. Joe gestured after him, and Macy nodded, taking up the trail. A man would be on Mandell until the case was ended.

Illustrated by James Ernst

He went into the other room. Danny Pell's face was twitching. He had dark eyes, and there was a pulse beating in his neck. He said: "See here, Joe, you know Alice and Bo didn't have anything to do with this. Why do you have to be such a damn' cop?"

"Temper—temper," said Joe, waving a finger at the tall man. "You were always hot, even in school. You ought to watch that, Danny. Tell me, were you around here last night?"

"What the hell would I be doing around here?"

"You weren't with Alice and Bo?"

"Certainly not. Why should I be?"

"You ever hear about any money Horace Needle left behind?"

Danny Pell scowled. "No—but—"

"But what?"

"Well, she had dough, Goldie did. Not a lot, but enough. She could give a little party, buy some beer. She could go to movies, even the theater. And she didn't work. I guess Horace left a little roll somewhere."

"It isn't here," said Joe. "We've looked." And when the Department searched, the men found whatever there was to find. Now they would have to look upstairs. That stuck in his mind. He would have to turn them loose on Alice's apartment. He hated to have them poking among the neatness of her belongings. He said idly: "You're pretty fond of Alice yourself, huh, Danny?"

"She's a straight girl," said Pell. "She's carryin' a torch for somebody, and it ain't me."

Joe said: "Okay, Danny. You can go. Take it easy—and watch that temper."

"Don't be a damn' cop," said Danny. He adjusted his already immaculately pressed garments and went out.

Trimble called to him: "We got to case upstairs, y' know."

"Yeah," said Joe. "I know. I'll call you." Marble had two of his patrolmen in the hall. Marble was sticking with the case, then. The Captain was hunting a bit of headline, Joe sup-

posed. There was a lot of politics to being a precinct officer.

Joe went up the stairs again and tapped on the door. Alice was a moment in answering, and she did not look well. He wished that he could say something to help her, but he had a leaden feeling inside him. The whole thing was wrong. He felt of the sketch-pad in his breast pocket. Right from the beginning the odor of the thing had been all wrong.

He said: "Alice, they are going to search your place. You see, the whole thing is tied in. You and Bo and Danny, all friends with Mrs. Needle. . . . I never knew she was called Goldie—and she without other friends on account of that old thing—and you and Bo around here, last night. You got the time straight yet?"

"No," she said. "It was after midnight, I think." There was a clock on the mantel and he had that sharp feeling that she was lying.

She was under terrific strain. She sat on a chair, her hands writhing like white snakes in her lap. The phone rang, and she leaped to answer it. Her voice was guarded, answering.

It was no good listening, so Joe ostentatiously walked out of the room. He went through a small dining space. Alice's bedroom door was open. He paused gingerly on the threshold. He heard her voice saying almost in a whisper; "No. . . . I'm all right, I tell you. *No.*"

Joe stepped into the room. He looked at the dressing-table, and it was clean and orderly, without powder stains or smeared lip-red or smelly perfume. Only the comb and brush lay awry, and he reached to straighten it.

He had the brush in his hand, turning it over in the soft light of the shaded lamp on the dresser. There was a picture in a frame, and he started, recognizing it. They had been together when it was taken, ten years ago, when he had been promoted from the beat, and the PBA magazine had wanted it for publication. . . .

He stared at the hairbrush. There was hair mixed with the bristles. He turned the brush in the light.

It was not Alice's hair. It was blond hair, with a touch of gray. He would have bet a thousand dollars it would match, under the microscope, the hair of the woman in the morgue. . . .

Mechanically he took out an envelope and disentangled the strands from the bristles. He put the envelope in his pocket. He knew now that his first premise had been correct. There was something wrong with this murder. He knew what it was.

He also knew that his chain of circumstantial evidence was too thin and weak to stand attack by a good trial lawyer. He would need link after link to add to what he had now. He would have to achieve by weight what he could not through strength.

And where would the chain lead? He shut his jaw tight and went back into the living-room. Alice was hanging up the phone. She said dully: "That was Danny Pell, offering to help if he could. He wanted to know if you were here, and I told him you were. Is that wrong?"

"No," said Joe. "That was all right. Do you mind if they search now? You maybe should go out. They'll mess it up something awful."

She said: "I'll—I'll take a walk."

"I can't go with you," he said. "You want to call someone? Bo?"

She shook her head. "I'd rather be alone. This—this is very tragic to me. I know they suspect Bo. He didn't do it, Joe. He—he couldn't do it. Bo's kindly and good."

Joe said: "You go ahead, Alice. Don't go far, though. I'll expect you back before our men leave."

She said: "You'll be worrying about me? After ten years?"

"Yes," he said. He looked into her eyes. "I'll be worrying."

She turned and went down the stairs. She didn't try to have the last word now. He wondered at that, and then he worried some more. She had never been like this in the old days. She had been quick of speech, rather sharp of tongue. Her mind had raced ahead of his slow, methodical policeman's mind, and that had been the cause of their trouble.

He called Trimble. He said: "Take it easy, now. People have rights, you know. We've no warrant for this, and I wouldn't want any kickback."

Trimble said: "Agh! This thing smells fishy to me, Chance. This broad—Pell, a bookie—Mandell, an ex-con guy—Mrs. Needle, the widder of Horace. . . . There's somethin' stinkin' here."

"Take it easy," Joe repeated. He helped with the search. The two patrolmen were no use, but the younger was intelligent, and Joe for-

Joe knew enough to fling to one side. The first shot grazed him.

got some of his worriment in showing the proper procedure. Trimble was all thumbs, but he spotted the picture on the dresser.

"Looks like you. Your brother?"

"No," said Joe shortly, putting the picture face down. Good thing he had changed in ten years, he thought, and that it was not a fair likeness. Trimble, already smelling a rat, would have made something of it. But Trimble was not smart—just suspicious and experienced.

They found nothing of any value. The neatness of the place destroyed, the police left. They padlocked Mrs. Needle's apartment and Joe left the young, intelligent cop on guard until relief could be sent.

Alice had not returned. Joe walked down Kay Street toward the bus line. He had no desire to sleep. He had to go downtown and report anyway, and the hair in the envelope was burning his pocket. He passed the dark alley between Gaye's Delicatessen and the apartment house where he had once lived, ten years ago. His thoughts were of Alice, and he wondered where she was taking her lonely walk.

He was wondering what she really felt; how deep her fear went. The thing that he knew weighed like a ton of lead within him. He did not really believe Alice had killed Mrs. Needle—but she had lied to him. He knew without question that Alice had lied.

It was not like her to lie. "Tell the truth and shame the devil," she had always said in the old days. And she had done so, too often, in the opinion of some people. She had lost popularity by it, and she had never tried to make many friends, because she felt that people did not tell the truth often enough.

She had lied, and he thought he knew why, but he could not be sure. He thought she was lying to keep Bo Mandell out of trouble. It was not very smart to lie like that, because telling the truth to an intelligent police officer will often save much trouble and misunderstanding, and in some cases it will save human life, Joe knew. But he could understand her lying to protect the man with whom she was in love.

He thought of the old photograph on her dressing-table. Habit, no doubt, long habit of having it there, would account for that. It was Bo Mandell now.

Bo could have killed Mrs. Needle, of course. He had no alibi. He was in the vicinity. He knew her better than anyone else, and if Horace had left a cache, Bo would know that too. And if Bo wanted to marry Alice, and figured part of that money was his—

But it had not happened that way, and Joe knew it. It simply did not fit that way. He was jumping to a fairly long conclusion, as he freely admitted to himself, but he knew the way it had to have happened.

HE glanced into the dark alley between the buildings merely out of nostalgia for the old haunts, the place he had lived when he was going around with Alice.

That quick look saved his life.

There was only a shadow, but Joe had been a cop a long time. He knew enough to fling himself to one side. The first shot grazed him.

He went down on one knee, reaching for his own gun. It was buttoned down and he had to loosen the snap. It came into his hand, and he reached out with it, firing. He hated to shoot into the darkness, fearful of a wild shot which would kill an innocent bystander, but the orange stabs of fire had to be silenced, or he would be a dead detective. He did not try to aim. He pressed the trigger three times, then threw himself sidewise, out of range of the alley's mouth.

He worked close to the building. He did not dare rush the blind darkness. He waited, listening. A patrolman's whistle sounded; then footsteps pounded; but he could not hear what took place in the alley.

So he had to go in. He went fast around the corner of the apartment house, the gun in his right hand. He braced himself against gunfire which did not come.

He ran down to a remembered door. It led into a hall, then turned at right angles. There was a back door. It stood gently ajar. Windows were going up; people were thrusting frowsy heads from them.

Joe went out through the back. It was no good. It was worse than finding a needle in a haystack. The least agile person could walk out through that back door, into another alley—any one of several—and disappear into the neighborhood.

JOE let the patrolman take over, going down to the bus line. He pondered all the way to Headquarters, putting little things together in his mind, getting dolorous answers.

People were frail, he thought. They meant well, mostly, but they made a misstep and were trapped by circumstance, and then they lost their heads and went berserk. And it was bad to lie to cops; the police might be slow and sometimes stupid, but they did work carefully and long, and things came out in their slow grinding mill.

He went into the Lab and got the hair ticketed. He reported to the Lieutenant, and was told to stay on the job. He went back outside and remembered the relief for the young cop at Needle's. The phone was ringing when he reëntered Headquarters, and it was for him.

Macy's heavy voice said, chagrined: "Chance? Say, that Mandell—he lost me. Had him down to his joint, then thought I oughta check. He didn't answer his phone, so I went in. He scrammed out the back door."

"Okay," said Joe wearily. "Find him and pick him up."

"Hey, you got somethin' on that joker? I thought so. I knew there was somethin' very un-kosher about—"

"So you lost him," snapped Joe. "Now get busy!"

He decided to go up and relieve the cop himself. Then he knew all along that he meant to go back. Alice had to have a chance to tell the truth before he put the report in writing and filed it. He took a late-cruising hack and gave the address.

The young cop was excited. He said: "Hey, Chance, you know them two guys—Pell and Mandell? They were both around."

"When?" asked Joe.

"A half-hour ago. Pell, he comes down from toward Main. Mandell comes the other way, Kay Street. They meet. I'm down in the basement entrance, see? Out of sight! So they stop, and Pell says: 'They got a cop inside.' Mandell says: 'So what?' Pell says: 'I'd like to see if Alice is okay.' Mandell says: 'Alice is okay. Chance'll see to that. He's nuts about her.' That's what he said, see?"

Joe said: "Go on."

"Then Pell says: 'What you doin' here, pal?' 'Same thing you are,' says Mandell. Pell says: 'You better go home. You gotta get up in the morning. I don't.' So they walk along, and I don't hear any more, and then they turn the corner. . . . Wasn't there a tail on Mandell?"

"He shook Macy," said Joe. "That's neat work, kid. I'll put you in the report."

The young cop's face glowed. "I could stick on, Chance. I'm off duty now, but I'll stick if you say so."

"Get your sleep," said Joe. "I'll remember you." It would be good to have a loyal, smart young detective downtown, one he could foster and depend upon. "I'll take over here."

He stood alone, looking at the house of tragedy. He had almost all the links of the chain in his pocket. But he knew the case would not stand up. He knew, too, why shots had been taken at him, and he knew the impossibility of proving that. He was a man slow to anger, but he burned inside at thought of the killer standing in a dark alley, shooting at him.

Then he shrugged. The murderer was in a panic. It had been a strange, twisted crime. Once in it, the killer grew frantic and lost what brains he or she might have possessed. Shooting at Joe was the supreme stupidity; a dead cop would bring the entire Force to the Neck in vengeance. But fear knows no boundaries, and cowards kill most readily, Joe thought.

He walked down to the corner, staring back at the blank face of the modest house. Alice would be asleep, he hoped. He returned, and fingered the key to the padlock on Mrs. Needle's door. After a moment he tiptoed up the steps, let himself in silently and went into the room where the dead woman had been found.

They had done a good job, searching. There was nothing at all to tie into the crime. There were pictures of Horace Needle, of young Bo Mandell when he had been with Horace, of Goldie when she was a beauty. . . . There were the usual papers, but no personal letters—the late Mrs. Needle had been careful of her letters.

Yet there must be something. There always was, some intangible thing which would fit a pattern. He stared around. He had snapped on a floor lamp. He moved from room to room.

He remembered the conversation of Pell and Mandell as repeated by the young cop. He went over it—he never forgot anything.

He left the light burning and went into the hall. It was dark above-stairs. Even the hall light was out. The silence was profound.

He thought about Alice. He loved her; he knew that now. It had endured through the years. The sight of her coming toward him, the fear in her eyes, had stirred him as nothing ever had since their old quarrel. He loved her—and she had lied to him.

It was a case that would go unsolved. He knew it, and he knew why. Alice had fixed it for the murderer to go free. He stood in the dark hall wondering about it, wondering how she felt, and if she knew she had turned loose a murderer by her actions and her lying. Alice, who had always been so forthright and honest—how did she feel about it?

As if in answer her voice floated ghostlike down to him: "Joe?"

His eyes, growing accustomed to the darkness, made out the shadow of her form on the landing above. She was clad in a flowing white gown. She seated herself on the top step, leaning against the newel post. She said: "Don't come up, Joe. Stay there. . . . I can talk if you stay there."

He crouched a little, all his senses coming alive, his muscles tense. "I'll make it easier for you, Alice. I'm a pretty good detective, see? I know a lot about it already."

She said: "Bo—he's been so good and kind—"

Joe said: "Wait a minute. . . . You weren't with Bo until midnight. He left you to come here and talk with Mrs. Needle. That's what I want to know. Why did he want to talk with her?"

ALICE's voice was low. "Horace did not leave anything. But on his deathbed he asked Bo to take care of Goldie. And Bo did. Every week. Bo bet the horses and won. Oh, not much—he bled them, playing the favorites across the board. He never made quite enough—but he gave Goldie something every week. He told her it was Horace's money, that Horace had wanted Bo to dole it out that way."

"Ah!" said Joe. "That was it—I couldn't know that."

"Bo thought—thinks—I would marry him if he made enough money, if he had enough. So he was going to tell her the truth and try to make some arrangement. But she wasn't in. It was very strange that she wasn't in. I met Bo, and he told me, and I couldn't understand it. I came into the house about midnight—maybe a little later."

Joe said: "And you found her in your apartment, dead."

"How did you know?" Alice was startled.

"Jump," Joe yelled, as he fired. "Down the stairs. Jump!"

"The way she was laid out. And the furniture—it wasn't right. There were no fingerprints except yours and hers in the flat, and no footprints except yours and hers. They figured that was all right—you were always around in each other's apartments. But I figured further. I figured you brought her body down here because you thought Bo lied, that they had quarreled in your place and Bo had killed her. That was dumb, Alice. He wouldn't have left her there, in your place. Bo's too smart for that. He'd have done the same thing you did—moved her."

"I was in a panic," Alice breathed. "She looked so—awful. She had quarreled with Bo—about the money. She wanted several hundred dollars for something, and of course he couldn't give it to her, and she had been bitter."

"She probably put on the robe and went upstairs to see you about it, thinking you might persuade Bo," Joe said, half to himself. "She got caught there."

"But who caught her?" said Alice bewilderedly—her voice stronger, now that she had told the truth. "Who—who could have done it? Bo—I can't believe it was Bo. He was—he's been angelic about taking care of her, because Horace saved him from jail."

Joe's eyes were catlike in the darkness now. He saw the slight, indistinct motion behind the girl's huddled body. His blood froze for a split second. His mind raced, but he could not have moved a muscle. He said in a voice as natural as he could make it: "It's one of those things, Alice. She was in your apartment; some guy came in and slugged her. I don't think it will ever be solved."

He was sliding his hand behind him, to the revolver in its holster. He unbuttoned the flap. He slid out the gun, keeping it under his coat. He held it there, straining his eyes. The figure moved again. The girl was in the direct line of fire. It would be death for her, as sure as the thing started. The man with the gun which had fired so recklessly at Joe could not miss spraying her with lead. Sweat came from his pores and ran down under his shirt, matting it to his body.

"Oh, I can't believe it," said Alice. "That anyone could get away with murder like that! There must be something—some clue or something. You're such a good detective—"

Joe said, desperate now: "Well, there are a lot of unsolved killings every year." If he could only get the fear-ridden, frantic man to believe that he was scot free, perhaps he would go back up the ladder, through the trapdoor and over the roofs the way he had come. Then Joe would have a chance to cut him off. . . .

Alice said suddenly: "I've been having trouble, Joe—just over the telephone. But I ought to tell you about the calls I've been getting from—"

"Jump!" Joe yelled in a voice of thunder. "Down the stairs. *Jump!*"

He braced himself to break her fall. He thrust the revolver up and fired, purposely high. Alice did not react quickly enough. She turned to see what was behind her.

Joe bounded upward, shooting as he went. To his utter amazement, there was no return fire. He could not believe his first shot, aimed at the ceiling to distract the aim of the lurking killer, could have taken effect. He jumped over Alice's huddled, quivering body.

A man snapped on the hall light. It burned fitfully in a globe, shedding a dim yellow light. A figure lay in a heap on the landing, not six feet from Alice.

Bo Mandell said steadily: "I followed him. He's been after Alice. He

went into the house next door, and I was behind him. I knew he had a gun. So I brought this thing. It was in his drawer." He held out a long limber-handled blackjack.

Joe said: "If that's the murder weapon and he didn't chuck it away, he's as good as off on a plea of insanity."

Danny Pell groaned, moving on the floor. Joe handcuffed him to the newel-post and said: "We'll go inside and call the wagon. I think you saved Alice's life, and maybe mine, Bo."

They stared at each other in the sharp illumination of Alice's ceiling fixture. Bo Mandell was pale but calm. He said: "I'm glad I was in time. I knew he was after Alice. I've known it for a year. He was my friend —but he was after her."

Joe said: "He came in over the roof to— Was he drunk?"

"Yes," said Bo steadily. "I knew he was drunk. Pernod. For two days. He was an amazing drinker. Few could tell."

"So he came in after Alice—and Mrs. Needle was there. He recognized her —and lost his head because she knew him. He never meant to kill. He was just after Alice and crazed with the pernod." Joe shook his head. "A sloppy thing."

"He had that temper," said Bo. "It crazed him. Alice had dated me that night. Jealousy—that's a strong motive, Joe. Jealousy, desire. For a man like Danny—the real Danny you and I know—that's motive."

"It's sloppy," said Joe. "Maybe you should have hit him harder."

Bo shook his head. The wagon sounded its siren. Marble would be riding it, eager to be in on the capture. There would be cops and photographers and newspaper men all over the place in a moment. Joe said: "You'd better dress, Alice. This won't be pleasant."

She moved as though in a trance. At the door to her bedroom she turned. She said pathetically: "But all this couldn't happen over *me*. Why must it all happen because of me? I couldn't—I never—oh! Why, why, *why?*" She went into the room, closing the door.

Bo Mandell said in his steady voice: "She loves you, Joe. She always has."

"I thought it was you—"

"I wish it was," said Bo. "She's a good friend, that's all. A real, loyal friend. She's been bitter and lonely because you never came back. You have a lot to make up to her, Joe."

Joe Chance got up and walked over to where the gray-haired tall man stood regarding him. He put a hand on Bo Mandell's shoulder. He said: "I'm a good cop, Bo; I thought it was Danny, especially after he took those stupid shots at me. That was like him—cornered, fighting like a rat, knowing I would get to him sooner or later because I had cautioned him about his temper. . . . I knew it, but he would have shot us if you hadn't followed him. You're a better cop than I am."

"That's a hell of a thing to say to an old con man." Bo grinned, but there was sadness in him, Joe knew.

"And you're a better friend," said Joe humbly.

Bo Mandell said: "That's all right, Joe. You see, I love her too. I want her to be happy."

The cops were coming. Joe wrung the hand of the man he had known from boyhood. Even a cop can learn, he thought. Even a cop can be taught by a man who has suffered. . . . He went to the door, hesitated, then walked into the room where Alice waited. She was dressed; and she was waiting, weeping a little—but waiting for Joe.

Songs That Have Made History

XVI—THE PATRIOTIC DIGGERS

Samuel Woodworth, at once poet, newspaperman, and printer, could turn on the literary tap and draw anything from a ballad to an editorial. Now there was an emergency demand for a stirring song, one that would inspire patriotism and action, and do it in a hurry. There was no time to lose; the British, all-victorious thus far in the War of 1812, were reported ready to sail into New York harbor and blow the city to pieces. Certainly the American fleet was not strong enough to stop them. Earthworks must be thrown up along Brooklyn Heights and the Battery and defended by cannon. Citizens must rally, to make the dirt fly. Maybe a song would rouse them.

Sam Woodworth had what it took for another type of song. A ditty of his has stood the test of time under the title of "The Bucket"—that old oaken one that hung in the well. But could he rise to this martial occasion? He could and did, writing a lively, cocky, belligerent piece called "The Patriotic Diggers."

Johnny Bull, beware! Keep at your proper distance,
Else we'll make you stare at our firm resistance.
Let alone the lads, who are freedom tasting.
Recollect our dads gave you once a basting.

Chorus

Pickax, shovel, spade, crowbar, hoe, and barrow.
Better not invade—Yankees have the marrow.

The song was a summons for everybody to turn out. Stanza after stanza sounded a clarion of democracy, a draft for universal digging service. Sam Woodworth tried not to miss a trade or profession. Lawyers, merchants, masons, painters, blacksmiths, grocers—he tunefully paged them all.

Scholars leave their schools, with the patriot Teachers.
Farmers seize their tools, headed by their Preachers.
How they break the soil—Brewers, Butchers, Bakers!
Here the Doctors toil, there the Undertakers.

Brooklyn responded to the power of song. The Heights were solidly fortified by patriotic diggers, singing about themselves as they toiled. But alas, in Manhattan—more sophisticated and indifferent then as now—work lagged sadly until one morning Broadway beheld a startling spectacle. To the rescue came one of the citizenry Sam Woodworth had forgotten to mention in his song's long catalogue.

She was one of the most fashionable ladies of the city. For all that, she was also a patriotic digger. Proof lay in the wheelbarrow she was trundling—earth spaded by her own fair hands in Trinity Churchyard. While shamefaced males watched, the lady pushed her load down to the Battery. Shovelers, bored and few, were suddenly and heavily reinforced, and ramparts rose like magic. Sam Woodworth had learned a fact that has frequently been demonstrated: It often takes a lady to put across a song.

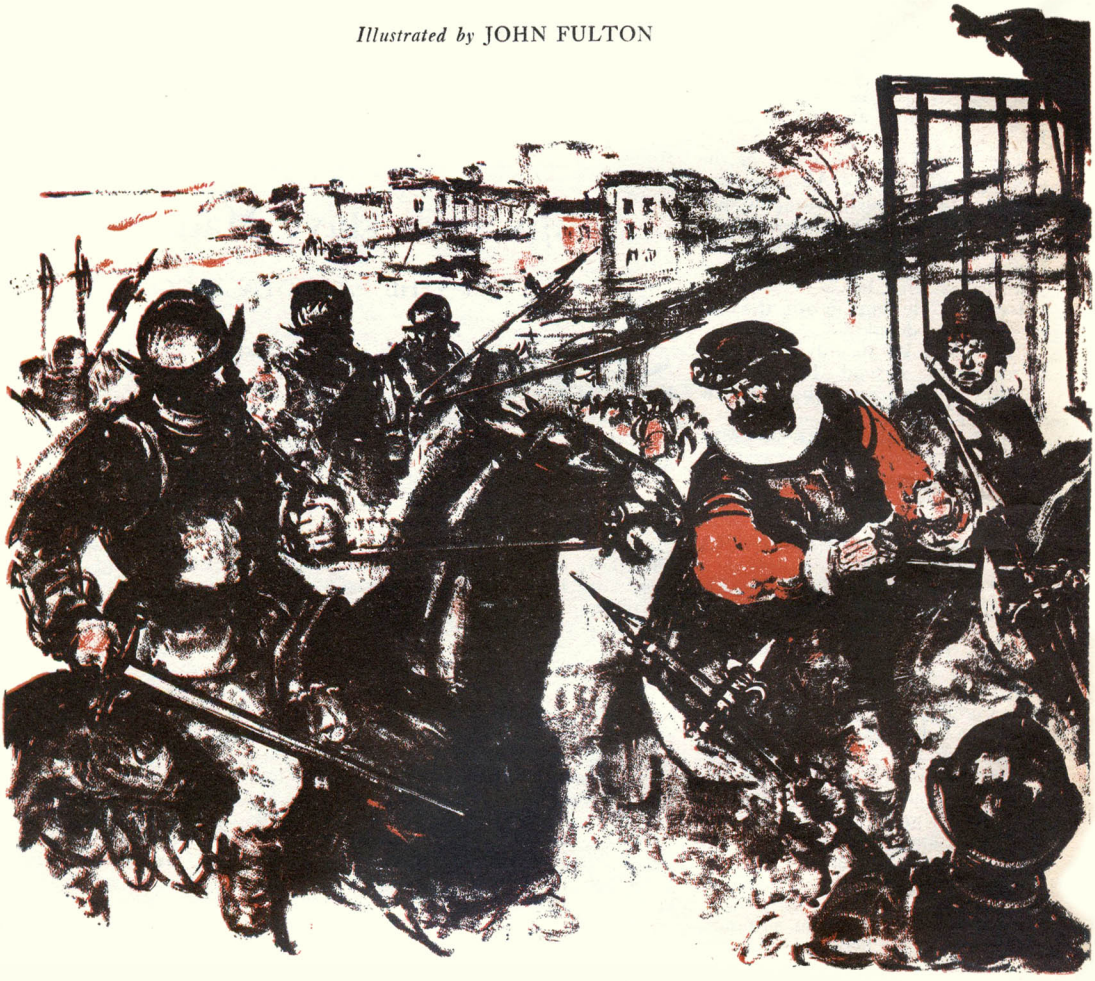
New York was ready, but the British failed to attack. If they had, perhaps Sam's song would not have been so nearly forgotten as it is today. His Britannic Majesty's fleet did bombard Fort McHenry, defending Baltimore, and a song born of that historic moment still thrives mightily. No wonder "The Patriotic Diggers" lost out to such strong competition as "The Star-Spangled Banner!"

—by Fairfax Downey

A GREAT ARTIST AND AN ABLE FIGHTING-MAN OF RENAISSANCE ITALY COMES CLOSE TO LOSING HIS LIFE IN DEFENSE OF A FRIEND.

A Sword for

Illustrated by JOHN FULTON



"By what authority do you stop and challenge honest men?" Cellini asked. "By this," the bravo said,

ADVENTURE is born in a man. It is of his psyche, his soul, his Ka, as the blood is of the flesh. It grows and nurtures, and springs full-flung; and no man is the lesser because of it. It forms no pattern, and no strain of man is endowed singly. Highborn or low, lucky is he who is so gifted, for blood sings hot in his veins, and he is the favored of the gods.

So it was with Benvenuto Cellini, he of the gifted hands and mind. He worked in metals and paint and precious stones, and his reputation was a thing which made men marvel that one so young should be so great. He created where other men copied, and his golden plate and jeweled morses and graceful designs were sought after by all the wealthy of Italy. His fame had even winged to France; and his commissions were so great his shop held a dozen apprentices who labored beneath his guidance.

And yet, because he was star-touched, because his capable hands fitted a sword as well, if not better, than an engraving tool, Benvenuto Cellini felt restlessness grow and spread dark wings in him, until at times he must leave Rome and follow his destiny into the devious bypaths where other men dared not tread.

He had followed it now for three months, and with the walls of Rome before him, he sighed a breath of relief at his return, for it seemed to him now that it was time to work and rest again and to let adventure seek others for its strong demands.

Rafael, at his side on a sorrel horse, fingered a lute with long fingers and composed a ballad about a lady love and the dark stranger on her balcony. His red hair flamed in the sunlight, and the lines of ready laughter were etched deep in his face.

"And lo! he crept the ivy vines," he sang, *"while his mistress waited high. And lo! the hapless husband—"*

Benvenuto

by WILBUR S. PEACOCK

and his sword-tip moved gently.

"Enough!" Benvenuto Cellini snapped in brief impatience. "Was it not bad enough that you should try an affair; must you sing of it, too?"

Rafael laughed aloud and kneed his horse closer to Cellini's. He was younger than his friend, and his talents were many and varied. A thief he had been, one of the ablest, and a forger and a magician, and a dozen other things at which the law looked askance. For months now he had been at Cellini's side, a friend, and his days of trickery lay in the past. But in the sly roguery in his eyes Cellini saw a mirror of his own youth, and so he did not condemn too harshly.

"And how you speak!" Rafael said mockingly. "If memory serves, you bared a blade one night at the Castel Cavallo."

Cellini grinned in memory, then jogged the horse ahead. "Come," he said. "Night grows near, and I would visit the shop before it closes."

They drove ahead down the dusty road, passing the slow flow of traffic which came to a standstill at the gates. Cellini frowned, dark eyes narrowing at sight of the guards and bravoes who stopped and searched all vehicles and travelers at the chains.

"What's happening?" Rafael called, but Cellini ignored the question, his strong hands curbing the horse to a walk as he approached the gate.

He recognized the uniforms now, for they were the buff and scarlet of the house of Mosti. They mingled with the more sedate uniforms of the Civil Guard, but it was obvious that the Mosti bravoes were the instigators of that which was happening.

"Halt!" a bravo snapped, and Cellini reined in, slow anger growing in him at the insolence of the soldier.

"By what authority do you stop and challenge honest men?" he asked.

"By this," the bravo said, and his sword-tip moved gently.

"Cosimo, enough," a swift incisive voice called from the guardhouse, and a man emerged into the waning sunlight. "Your servant, Master Cellini," he said courteously.

The soldier stood aside, and Benvenuto Cellini inclined his head in greeting. His gaze swung to where soldiers searched a farmer's cart of hay, using the blades of their swords. Then his gaze came back to Jacopo Mosti, and a question was on his face.

Jacopo Mosti was a frosty man, his beard silver-touched, his hair prematurely gray. He was tall and spare, and his clothes were of the French cut, as though Italian fashions were not good enough for him. And now, with Cellini staring at him, he cracked a wintry smile, white teeth showing.

"Do not be alarmed, Master Cellini," he said. "The men but search for a man and woman who escaped the prison at Florence, murderers both." He spread thin hands, then reached for the guarding chains. "It is good to see you returned. His Holiness will be most pleased to know his favorite guildsman is once again at home."

"It is good to be back," Cellini answered briefly. "And I shall seek audience with His Holiness at the first opportunity."

He sent his horse ahead, as Jacopo Mosti lifted aside the chain. Rafael followed, looking back with a frown at the milling of soldiers and travelers.

"I do not like that man, Benvenuto," he said. "Who named him 'the Bloodsucker' named him well."

Cellini nodded without answering. He too felt no favor for Mosti, who was datary to Pope Clement VII. The man was sly, and a bit too clever. Only luck had saved him from a charge of treason during the war with Spain. And now, to see him directing a hunt for common murderers—well, it was a strange business.

But, because it meant nothing to him, Cellini shrugged away the affair. This was Rome; it was his home; and returning to it was like peace after toil. The wide streets were alive with people. Cart men cried their wares, and children played with the loud outcries of the very young. A bishop, violet robe flowing, hurried along, speaking to a secretary at his side.

Horses of the Guard trotted by, breaking a path. A beggar stretched thin hands at a corner, and a juice-peddler drank his own wares in the shadow of a tavern.

Cellini sighed. This was the city of the Cæsars, and its history ran backward into time. Ruins stood to mark the passing of civilizations; but other buildings had risen, and the newer peoples grew greater through the years. And because he was of the new, and because his genius was a thing of strength and passion, Benvenuto Cellini was glad that he lived where history met the present and forecast the future. He was of this time; and somehow its very turbulence fitted him.

The side streets were quiet when at last they entered the gate at Cellini's home and turned their horses over to a groom. Rafael walked buoyantly at Cellini's side, as they entered; his first move was to pluck grapes from a table bowl and then to flop ungracefully onto a couch.

"A horse is all bones, and their points merge in its back," he said.

Cellini smiled, laying aside his cloak and sword-belt. Riding tired him too. He reached for the wine and carefully poured two glasses.

"To a successful journey!" he said, and lifted his glass.

He caught the turning of Rafael's head, and slowly he came about, glass still lifted. Astonishment held him for the moment. Then he set the glass upon the table and hurried forward, hands outstretched.

"Elisabetta!" he cried. "What do you here?"

And then she was in his arms, crying against the rangy spread of his shoulder. She was small against him, and her sobbing seemed uncontrollable, as though she would never stop.

Cellini swung his head and stared at Rafael, and the redhead spread his hands in wonder. Then Rafael indicated the couch, and Cellini led the girl that way, seating her, and after a moment, persuaded her to drink a glass of wine.

"What is it, child?" he asked at last, when her crying had eased.

ELISABETTA dabbed at her swollen eyes, soft sobs still clutching at her throat. The tears were gone now, but some of the emotion which had caused them was still left.

"I waited so long, Benvenuto," she said. "I thought you would never arrive."

Rafael cocked his head like a parrot, a sly smile on his mouth. For a moment Cellini felt anger; and then good sense intervened.

"What is it?" he asked again.

The wine was calming the girl now, and she caught her breath, fighting for control. Her gaze swept from Benvenuto to Rafael, and Cellini nodded in sudden understanding.

"Rafael is my friend," he said.

Elisabetta's voice was strained.

"I've waited here a day," she said. "Rafine permitted me to hide in your sleeping-chamber."

"Hide!" Cellini frowned. "But why?"

For answer Elisabetta fumbled in the pouch at her waist and drew forth a single sheet of much-creased paper. Cellini took it, opening and spreading it in the light from the window. As he read, a frown twisted his mouth, and black wrath began gathering in his eyes. The words leaped from the paper in all their treachery:

Ser Mallento

This is to advise that the Spanish invaders and the troops of His Holiness are in alliance and shall siege Florence within a short time. Final plans for battle must be made at once. I shall send, posthaste, all facts I am able to gather. My price, as agreed upon, when victory is ours, is a Duchy and fifty thousand gold scudi. Remember, betrayal of me will be disaster for you.

Ser Jacopo Mosti

Finished, Cellini handed the paper to Rafael.

"Mosti, Jacopo Mosti!" Cellini said.

Elisabetta nodded. "He kept Cesare and me imprisoned like animals until a few days ago. We bribed our way to freedom, only after we discovered we were to be executed. Cesare was wounded while escaping, and is hiding at the house of a friend in Florence. I came here, hoping to give that evidence to the Pope, but Jacopo Mosti made such a thing impossible."

As Cellini read, a frown twisted his mouth, and black wrath gathered in his eyes. The words leaped from the paper in all their treachery.

Rafael snorted in anger, his red hair flaming, as he waved the paper.

"Treason!" he said hoarsely. "Hell's perdition—Mosti betrayed the Medici in the battle of Florence! God only knows what other information he sent to the rebels!"

Elisabetta nodded. "That paper is his death-warrant," she said. "That is why he must have it back."

Benvenuto Cellini folded the paper, smoothing it with a heavy finger.

"How came you by this?" he asked.

"Cesare found it, hidden among Ser Mallento's secret papers," Elisabetta answered. "Ser Mosti was evidently making a secret visit to Florence, and was trapped when the battle began. And then, with the siege won, when the Spanish took over the city, all the leaders of the rebels were executed. Only Jacopo Mosti escaped, and that by having himself imprisoned, thus claiming the Florentines had meant to execute him for allegiance to the Pope and Charles of Spain. Once released, he entered the Pope's service. He was safe until Cesare found the paper, and Cesare talked imprudently. Mosti's bravoes captured him and me, and only because the evidence was well-hidden, were we permitted to live. Then, a few days ago, Jacopo Mosti must have decided we were to be no longer threats, for he ordered us to be killed. Friends managed to bribe the guards, and we escaped. The rest you know."

BENVENUTO CELLINI sighed as he reached for the wine. He poured and drank, and thoughts whirled in a maelstrom in his mind. Hatred was cold and naked in him then, hatred

for Mosti as a man and a traitor. Florence had withstood siege for ten months, giving eight thousand lives and claiming fourteen thousand of the enemy. Florence had changed its government when the Pope's forces had fallen before the might of Spain; and only an alliance between the Medici and Charles V had brought the city to its knees again. Now Duke Alessandro ruled, and he was implacable in searching out the former enemies of his family.

"But what," Cellini asked, "can I do?"

Hope came to the girl's eyes. "We were friends in Florence, you and Cesare and myself," she said. "Now I make claim upon that friendship. You have entrance to the palace of His Holiness, and so you must take this paper to him. When justice is done, then Cesare and I can walk freely, without fear."

A pulse throbbed at Cellini's temple, and there was heat in his veins. There was excitement here, and danger, and he thrilled to the thought. Mosti was a dangerous man, for he commanded a hundred bravoes. And with his life held by the dozen or so lines of writing on the paper, he would not hesitate to slit the throat of any man who dared to bring it to the Pope.

"Of course we'll take the evidence to His Holiness!" Rafael said in high indignation. "We'll show the Bloodsucker for the man he is."

Benvenuto Cellini smiled. "It will be a simple task," he agreed. "I shall not be suspected, of course." He eyed the clock against the wall, studying its single hand. "It is now but an hour until His Holiness will hold audience."

Elisabetta wept again, but there was relief from terror in her quiet sobbing. Cellini watched silently for a moment, then arose. Rafael came erect and followed him, and they talked softly.

"Find Rafine," Cellini ordered, "and tell him to hide the girl until we return. On no account is he to permit her to leave, or anyone else to enter."

Rafael's gaze swung to the girl. "Mosti is a dog," he said heatedly.

Cellini nodded. "We'll choke his bark," he said. "Cesare saved my life, when we were boys, and I stood with him when he married Elisabetta." His hands caressed the sword hilt at the back of a chair. "I am sorry only that the task is so simple. But go and tell Rafine my orders and then return."

Rafael nodded and darted away, the echoes of his boots dimming in the hall. Cellini returned to the couch, towering over it, his dark face and heavy body seeming even larger by contrast with the girl.

"Cease crying," he said. "By the time two hours are past I will have returned." And he smiled reassuringly. "The time for fear is past, Elisabetta," he finished. "Wait here."

He turned and caught up his sword-belt, buckling it about trim hips. His cloak swung to his shoulders, and he was ready to leave when Rafael returned. Without words, they left the room, going toward the outer door. Pausing at the portal, Cellini bent and tucked the single sheet of paper deep into his right boot. He smiled, straightening.

"Now," he said, opening the door.

THE last rays of sunset painted the sky in broad bands of gold and green and scarlet; and shadows were stretching, as though to tangle unwary feet. The streets were almost deserted, and Cellini and Rafael walked swiftly toward the Pope's palace, silent with their thoughts.

"Do you think the girl was followed?" Rafael asked at last.

Benvenuto shook his head. "Mosti was at the gate, directing the search. He probably thinks she and Cesare are still outside the city." His hands clenched. "I'd give my life for them."

Rafael nodded, his face grim. He paced at Cellini's side, and in his slim litheness he was fully as dangerous as the larger man.

They rounded the corner; and then Rafael was whirling, trying to thrust Cellini back, while his free hand tugged at the sword he wore.

"Enough," a man's voice said roughly from a shadow. "Draw, and we cut you down."

They came from concealment, eight of them, and they wore the uniforms of the Mosti house. Swords were bright in their hands, and their bearded faces were those of bravoes, professional soldiers but a step above professional murderers. The first was Cosimo, who had stopped them at the gates of Rome.

"What is this?" Benvenuto Cellini asked.

Cosimo grinned, pressing closer, but taking no chances, for the prowess of Cellini with a weapon was almost a legend.

"Ser Mosti would speak with you," he said. "We are to see that you are not attacked by robbers on the way."

"Mosti!" Benvenuto said thinly. "What has he to do with us?"

The leader of the bravoes shrugged. "We but take orders," he said. "And the orders are to escort you—and protect you."

Cellini was tense, hand on his sword, as he calculated his position. Rafael hesitated, waiting his companion's move.

"Bah!" Rafael exploded. "Give them a taste of Christian steel."

Benvenuto measured the men. He knew his strength and his skill, as he knew Rafael's. But only a miracle could win them a fight against eight men with drawn swords. White anger beat at him, yet he forced casualness into his face and tone.

"Very well," he said. "Lead us to Ser Mosti." And his free hand touched Rafael and held the younger man in check for the moment.

They went ahead, swords scabbarded now, but ready for instant drawing. And walking carefully, nerves tight now, Benvenuto Cellini was conscious of the folded sheet of paper tucked into his boot. It had been a death-warrant for Jacopo Mosti; now it might prove to be his own.

And then, remembering his naïveté in thinking the delivery of the evidence would be a simple matter, Benvenuto Cellini grinned wryly.

THE house of Ser Jacopo Mosti reared three stories over the street. It was buttressed and balconied and built of huge blocks of native stone. It had withstood the sack of Rome, and the damages it had received had been repaired in the past months. Now lights blazed in the windows, and guards saluted smartly at the door, as the bravo leader ushered Benvenuto Cellini and Rafael into the lower hall.

"Ahead," the soldier snapped, and Cellini paced toward an open doorway.

Four men were in the room, one seated at a table, the others ranged at his back. The seated man was Jacopo Mosti, gray as an icicle, the others men of his personal guard. A sword glittered nakedly on the table, and the guards were armed.

Mosti glanced up at the entrance of the trio, and a wintry smile lighted his narrow face.

"Welcome, Master Cellini," he said cordially. "You and your friend are most prompt at accepting my invitation."

Rafael growled deep in his throat, then silenced at the pressure of Cellini's arm against his. Benvenuto Cellini forced a smile and approached the table.

"Your invitation had steel teeth," he said. "By what right do you treat me thus?"

"Come now," Mosti said lightly, "if my men were not polite, remember that they are soldiers, not gallants." His fingers tented on the table. "I but wanted you to share a glass of wine and talk a bit."

"I wouldn't drink with you, Bloodsucker," Rafael said, "if I were dying of thirst."

COLOR flamed in Mosti's thin face, yet he held himself in control.

"Your friend," he said to Cellini, "is a bit impetuous."

Cellini smiled. "He shares my sentiments," he said briefly. "Now, what do you want?"

He could feel the tightness of heavy muscles in his thighs, and he wondered just how much this cold man before him had guessed, or knew, of the situation.

"Master Cellini," Jacopo Mosti said, "I have a favor to ask. We are not friends—that I know; but I ask this on a higher plane than friendship. I ask this favor in the name of His Holiness, to whom my life is dedicated."

"And the favor?" Cellini replied.

He studied the man, remembering the few lines of writing on the paper in his boot. He had never found it in himself to like Mosti; and now, knowing him to be a traitor, he barely held his anger and contempt in check.

Mosti leaned back in his chair, his fluted collar tilting a bit from his weight. Gems glittered on his hands, and his gray hair was almost white in the lamplight. The guards were motionless statues which could galvanize into swinging life at a single command.

"You are from Florence," Mosti said; "and it is known you are a friend of the Medici. Well, then, you must aid me. After the battle of Florence, when His Holiness' troops won over the traitorous rebels, certain citizens were placed in prison for their treachery. Among them were Cesare Camaldo and his wife Elisabetta. It is known these two were childhood friends of yours, and that you were at their marriage."

Benvenuto Cellini rocked a bit in growing rage. Only his will kept his body quiescent.

"And so?" he said softly.

"And so," Mosti continued, "these two were placed in prison for traitorous actions against His Holiness and Charles of Spain." Mosti's lips tightened. "They escaped a few days ago, and it is known they are attempting to reach the Pope to attempt an assassination. I ask you, as a friend and confidant of the Pope, if you know anything of these criminals' whereabouts?"

"And if I should say that I do?" Cellini answered.

"Then you must disclose their hiding-place and turn them over to my men. Their execution has been ordered for treason, and to permit them to roam free is to invite disaster."

Rafael grunted a half laugh. "Never did you speak truer words!" he said.

Jacopo Mosti's hands fisted suddenly. "Do not test my patience too far," he said to Rafael. "Even Master Cellini's sponsoring of you does not carry too much protection."

"You speak a bit strongly, considering your own record and the doubts cast upon it," Cellini said grimly.

Color faded from Mosti's face, leaving it chalk-white. Almost did he

"You go too far," Benvenuto Cellini said, barely moving his lips.

come from his chair, and then he subsided with a muffled laugh.

"I do not wish to argue with you," he said. "I want only to know if you have met, or heard from, the traitors I named."

"Traitors!" Rafael burst out. "Bah! We know who betrayed the Pope—and it was not Elisabetta and her husband."

Alertness came to Jacopo Mosti. He leaned forward. "You have heard from them!" he said.

Benvenuto silently cursed the impetuousness of Rafael, and strove to keep all emotion from his face.

"I know nothing more than you have told me," he said. "You make charges without proof, and ask me to believe." His shoulders squared. "We will go now, for I must give greetings to His Holiness."

"Cosimo!" Mosti snapped.

Cellini went rigid, for a sword-point had centered in his back. He did not move, as the bravo's hand circled him and loosened and removed his sword-belt. Even Rafael was held in thrall, for one short stroke could slay Cellini.

"You go too far," Benvenuto Cellini said, barely moving his lips.

"Maybe!" said Jacopo Mosti.

Cellini breathed easier, for the sword pressure was gone from his back. Cosimo had stepped away, but his sword was still ready for a stroke.

"You will have to answer for this," Cellini said thinly.

"I shall—"

Rafael broke the deadlock then. Anger flared in his face, and he whipped about, steel singing on steel as he drew.

"You'll answer to me, you damned traitor!" he cried, and drove at the man behind the desk.

For a second the tableau held; and then Cellini was whirling, hoping to snatch his sword from Cosimo. But the bravo danced away, and Cellini was defenseless, weaponless.

Jacopo Mosti had reared from his chair, striving to escape Rafael's sword, and the chair toppled, catching the guards and sprawling them aside. Mosti escaped, twisting sidewise to the floor.

Rafael grunted in disgust, and then his free hand snatched the sword on the table and tossed it hilt-first at Cellini. Benvenuto caught it, and spun about, driving at Cosimo, even as the three guards regained their balance and came at Rafael.

Cellini led, riding his sword high, drawing Cosimo out of position. He lunged, and the parry was barely in time. Sparks flew, and steel rang like a bell as the swords met.

Sound exploded in the room. Mosti was crying for more guards, and the men facing Rafael roared in excitement. They pressed against him, forcing him back; blood showed on his free arm, and he parried a blade with his wrist.

Benvenuto Cellini grunted, going in, not wasting time on subtleties. He lunged and thrust again, and his teeth were bared. Rage flamed in him, and his strength would not be denied. He drove the other's sword aside, and then he led with his point, and metal grated upon bone and then sank deep. The bravo died badly, a cough spewing blood, Cellini's sword tearing free as he fell.

Cellini whirled about, closing in on the guard closest to him. Rafael had taken a point beneath his arm, and he staggered a bit. But bravery was in him, and a desperation that would not die.

"Run!" he cried to Cellini. "Take the evidence to the Pope."

Cellini parried a blow, then swung the blade like an axe. His opponent crumpled, almost decapitated, crimson pounding in a jerky flood.

"Here!" Jacopo Mosti cried loudly. "Guards, *to me!*"

Answers were cried, and men piled into the room. Cellini groaned; he and Rafael had no chance at all.

"Run!" Rafael called hoarsely.

IT was a time for instant decision, and Cellini made his choice. To die here was to accomplish nothing. Even the sacrifice of Rafael was as nothing, no matter how much he loved the youth. The evidence must be saved, not entirely because of Cesare and Elisabetta, but because Jacopo Mosti had betrayed the Pope once and might do it again.

He hesitated, though, torn by loyalty to Rafael. But in that instant the gallant redhead went down, and he knew there was no need for staying.

He could not escape the way he had come, for men streamed through that door. He saw another doorway to one side, and he raced toward its safety. Men cried out behind; and a thrown sword hissed past him and went point-first into the wall as he hurtled through the doorway.

He barely caught his balance, reaching out for the edge of the door and flinging it shut. His lashing hand forced the heavy bar into place; and then the door rocked from the weight of men throwing themselves against it.

Cellini sucked in a deep breath, turning and trying to study the room. Stumbling, remembering a flashing glance of a table at one side, he groped toward it. His hand brushed its top and found a flint box and a short candle in a holder. Laying his sword aside, he used the flint to produce flame and then lit the candle.

The door still rocked from heavy blows, but it was solid and would hold for a while, and so Cellini felt safe for the moment. At least he would have time to find another door or a window through which he could escape.

He lit four candles on a silver candelabrum, using the first candle, and then held the candelabrum high, as he searched for a means of exit. And as he turned, slow panic built in him, built and choked his throat.

And as though at a signal, the pounding on the door ceased, and Mosti's voice came dimly.

"Cellini," Jacopo Mosti cried, "surrender, or we torture your friend."

Benvenuto Cellini leaned against the table, shaking, and he rocked a bit in the tautness of his emotions. For he recognized the victory cry in Mosti's voice. Jacopo Mosti knew, even as Cellini had just discovered, that the room was a sleeping-chamber, without windows, and with the only exit the doorway through which Cellini had entered.

"Cellini," Jacopo Mosti cried, "surrender, or we torture your friend."

"Hell's perdition!" Benvenuto Cellini swore, and he knew then that this room was a death-trap from which he could never escape.

Jacopo Mosti's voice kept calling words, but Benvenuto gave no heed. He took the candelabrum and went about the room, making a quick examination in the flickering yellow light. He brushed back wall hangings, searching for a hidden egress, and found only plastered surface. His boots tramped the floor, seeking a trapdoor, and only heavy echoes came as answer.

A single bed was in the room, and a clothes hamper was in one corner. Three chairs were there, one behind the table. The table held paper and quills and ink and two account books; and at one end Mosti's sword scabbard and belt hung from a peg.

Cellini touched the scabbard absently, and jewels sparkled from its surface. Mosti had evidently been retiring when he made his sudden decision to bring Cellini to the house for his lying plea for aid.

Benvenuto Cellini swore and set the candelabrum on the table. His hand closed upon the hilt of the bloody sword, and he went toward the door. He had only a slim chance at escaping there, but it must be taken. The odds were greater than any single man could hope to face; yet it was but a matter of time before the door was broken in and his death accomplished.

"Cellini," Jacopo Mosti's voice came through the bolted door, "don't be a fool. You cannot hope to win free; make a deal with me."

Benvenuto Cellini smiled despite himself. He was hardly in a position to deal with anybody except on a losing basis. But because he needed a few minutes to regain his breath and strength, he answered.

"I make no deals, Mosti," he cried. "The evidence is where you will never find it; and unless I reappear at my home within the hour, it will be delivered to the Pope."

There was silence for a moment, and then a man cried out in agony. Cellini tensed, recognizing the voice; and his hand was on the bolt, ready to throw it back, when Mosti called out again.

"That was your friend, Cellini," he cried. "I swear to you that, unless you surrender and give me that evidence, he shall be cut to pieces here and now, and his death will be on your head."

Benvenuto Cellini leaned against the door, sick at heart, his mind fighting for control of his emotions. His gaze went desperately about the room, as though to find the escape which was not there. He saw the bed and chairs and table, and futility swelled in his heart.

"You have but a minute to make your choice," Jacopo Mosti cried. "First, your friend will die, and then we shall take the room and you."

Cellini rocked in indecision. He bent, fumbling the paper from his boot, and held it into the light. It was a little thing, in a way, very unimportant. He tried to convince himself that it was too unimportant to fight about.

Rafael cried out again in pain, and Cellini sagged against the door, defeat in the lines of his broad shoulders.

"Cellini!" Mosti called.

And then Rafael's voice came, weak but still unafraid. "Don't do it, Benvenuto!" he cried. "Don't—"

His voice went silent.

Benvenuto Cellini bit his lips. "Is he dead?" he called, and Mosti answered:

"Not yet. Now will you yield?"

Cellini's gaze went about the room for the last time; then he shrugged and reached for the bar. A thought came then, and he paused, held in thrall for the moment. Slowly the thought emerged, and he treasured it, exploring its possibilities.

Then he swung to the door, and his voice lifted.

"I will make a deal with you," he cried.

"What is it?" Jacopo Mosti could not keep the eagerness from his tone.

Cellini chose his words carefully. "I know where the evidence is hidden," he said. "But before I tell you the hiding-place, there are things which must be done."

"And they are?" Mosti's voice called in quick suspicion.

"Rafael must be taken to my house. Then a note must be returned, signed by the occupants of my house, that Rafael is alive. When that note is passed to me, you will act as hostage to my blade until I am free of this house. After that, I shall deliver the evidence to you."

There was silence in answer to the demands. Benvenuto Cellini waited, perspiration rolling down his cheeks. This was his one chance of leaving alive; on it hinged everything. Then Jacopo Mosti answered.

"It is a bargain," he called. "I care nothing for you or your friends. Your words could not stand against me without the evidence to support it. Your friend is being taken away now."

Benvenuto Cellini sighed in relief. He had won the first move; now the rest lay in the lap of the gods. Then Mosti's voice came again.

"No trickery, or you shall regret it. Do you understand?"

"I understand," Benvenuto Cellini said grimly, and flexed his hand.

He left the door and went to the table. Catching a cloth from the bed, he cleaned the sword he carried. The minutes ran leaden, but he was busy. He laughed once, thinking of what Rafael would say of his task; and then he was busy again, eyes straining in the flickering light of the candles.

An hour passed, and the greater part of a second, before Jacopo Mosti hammered upon the door again. A folded sheet of paper came sliding beneath the door. Cellini slid Mosti's sword clear of its jeweled scabbard and went to the door, stopping to retrieve the paper. It was from his servant Rafine, and signed were the names of the apprentices who lived in his house. Mosti had kept his share of the bargain. Now Rafine and the others knew that Cellini was in Mosti's home, and Mosti would not dare to murder him except as a last resort.

"Come out," Jacopo Mosti cried, and Cellini slid back the bar.

He jerked the door open suddenly, and his blade licked out, centering on the startled Mosti. Bravoes were

A gasp went through the great audience chamber. To draw a sword in the Pope's presence was to invite disaster.

about, but none dared move now, for any movement might cost their master his life.

Jacopo Mosti swallowed hard, and some of the bravado went from his eyes. But his tone was level.

"Where is the evidence?" he asked.

"Here!" Cellini said, and handed the wrinkled sheet of paper to the other.

Mosti grabbed the paper, holding it into the light, eagerness in his face. He chortled softly, then reached out and held the paper in the flame of the nearest huge candle. It flared instantly, burning; Mosti released it at last, and ashes and the last bit of burning paper dropped to the floor.

Cellini watched the ashes settle, and in that moment, a bravo slashed with the flat of his sword, knocking Cellini's arm down. Instantly other swords came to line, and he froze motionless.

Jacopo Mosti laughed aloud. "So you held the evidence!" he said. "And you were on your way to His Holiness." He stepped back. "Strip him," he ordered; "he may have other papers concealed."

Benvenuto Cellini submitted to the indignity of undressing, and watched his clothes searched piece by piece. Strangely, there was no anger in his eyes, only sardonic laughter. And then, after he was dressed, he swung to Mosti.

"Do I go free now?" he asked.

Mosti rubbed hands together with a rustling sound. "You may go free, Master Cellini, but with a word of advice: Forget this little episode ever happened. Tell your friends to keep their tongues silent. For understand this: my position in the palace is such that it cannot be attacked by mere words—and I do not wish to be compelled to search for revenge. Now go."

He was laughing, his gray face wrinkled with humor, as Benvenuto Cellini turned and strode from the room.

It was eighteen o'clock, and some of the midafternoon heat seeped into the audience chamber of the Pope. His Holiness sat in audience, his aides at his back and side, and his wise eyes studied the group before him calmly as he spoke.

"This is an extraordinary tale you have given us, Master Cellini," he said. "Were it not that we know you for an honest man, we would not permit the tale to be finished."

"It is a tissue of lies, Your Holiness," Jacopo Mosti said silkily from where he stood.

"It is no lie," Benvenuto Cellini said evenly. "As you say, I am an honest man. My story but proves what was whispered about Jacopo Mosti; he is a traitor."

"Bah!" Mosti drew himself up, one hand on the hilt of his sword, where jewels flashed on the scabbard. "Where is this evidence of which he prates? What truth can this criminal woman speak? And as to Master Cellini's thievish companion, you already have heard how he fought and killed a soldier of mine over the kisses of a kitchen wench."

Clement VII nodded his head. "It seems the story is a bit farfetched, we must admit," he agreed. "Where

is this evidence?" he finished to Cellini.

Benvenuto Cellini perceived the laughter in Mosti's eyes, and memory of a sheet of paper burning was in his thoughts. But a smile was on his lips, and he was big and calm and assured. His eyes touched Elisabetta and the bandaged Rafael, and they found reassurance in his gaze.

And then his sword whirred from his scabbard, and he presented its point at Mosti's throat.

A single gasp went through the great audience chamber. To draw a sword in the Pope's presence was to invite disaster. As in any court, a weapon was worn for display and not for use. Black anger surged in Clement's face, but beyond a stiffening, he made no move.

"Your sword," Cellini said softly to Jacopo Mosti. "I would have your sword."

Mosti's features were frozen, and a drop of blood skidded down his throat from the prick of the blade's keen tip. Fumblingly he loosened his belt and handed it to Cellini.

Benvenuto grinned and, backing three steps, dangled the jeweled sword and scabbard from his free hand.

"I fought with this sword last night," he said. "Ser Mosti took it back when I lost it while watching him burn a page of evidence in a candle flame."

"He's mad!" Mosti gasped, and fingered his throat.

Cellini laughed aloud and thrust his sword into the sheath at his hip. He drew Mosti's sword, and whipped it singingly through the air. Palace guards were moving slowly in, but he ignored them.

"Do you take me for a blockhead?" he said to Jacopo Mosti. "Did you really think any of your bravoes could take a blade from me except by sheer ability? I permitted that by-play."

"Permit—" Puzzled terror grew in Jacopo Mosti's eyes.

"Of course!" Cellini returned the blade to its jeweled scabbard, but reversed now. "I knew you would not accept that evidence as all, unless you were convinced I hid nothing more on my person."

He ripped the blade free of the scabbard, but now the edge had caught the soft leather of the top, and it ripped half its length. Cellini's strong hands bent the strips of metal and leather apart, and then his fingers found the single sheet of rolled, wrinkled paper and handed it to the Pope.

"There is the evidence, Your Holiness," he said evenly. "I placed it in the scabbard last night, knowing Ser Mosti always wore his sword, even here."

"It's—it's—" Mosti began, but the Pope silenced him with a single glance.

Clement VII read, and anger grew in his face. And then he was through, and his features were hard.

"Take this man to the Torre di Nona," he said to the nearest guards. "He is under arrest for treason."

Jacopo Mosti was like a man stunned with a blow. He made no outcry, no complaint, as he was led away. And when he was gone, Benvenuto Cellini tossed the sword and damaged scabbard to the nearest guard, then turned to stand erect before the Pope.

"Your Holiness," he said earnestly, "that no more injustice be done, I ask that you give Elisabetta Camaldo a paper which will clear her and her husband Cesare for all time of the heinous charge falsely placed against them."

"It shall be done," Clement answered. "And for your service to the Church and Italy?"

Benvenuto Cellini grinned. "No commissions for a time," he said. "I would like to rest."

"That too is granted." His Holiness smiled. "And our thanks, Master Cellini for what you did this day." He stood. "This audience is ended."

Benvenuto Cellini stood at the side of Rafael and Elisabetta as the Pope and his retinue left the room. Then he caught their arms and hurried them toward the outer doors. Elisabetta was smiling through happy tears, and Rafael grunted with every step, for his skin had been punctured half a dozen times in the fray of the night before.

"But how?" Rafael asked, when they stood in the sunlight. "Hell's perdition, man, you said yourself that Mosti burned the evidence."

Cellini grinned. "It is your influence, Rafael," he said. "If you live with me much longer, I shall be as raffish as you." He breathed deeply, stretching. "For an artist such as I, it was a simple thing. I forged a copy of the evidence in the time given me by my bargain with Mosti. I then crumpled and aged it with floor dirt—and in his excitement at its recovery, he did not scan it too closely before burning. Then I lulled his suspicions by permitting a search to be made of me. The rest you know."

Rafael laughed and linked his good arm in Cellini's. "What a criminal you would make—were you not so honest!" he said.

And then the three of them went down the palace steps, and the fears and terrors of the past were gone, and the good life lay ahead.

The MARKED FIELD

He was a big man. His shadow in the late August sun stretched from the running track surrounding the football field and ran halfway up the banked concrete steps of the stadium, as if trying to peer into the glassed-in press box perched on the rim. He strolled out onto the barbered grass of the playing-field, reached a point where a thirty-yard line would run later in the year, and viewed the empty terrain like a reminiscing general surveying a former battlefield. The late autumn wind would quarter from the north at this spot, forcing chilled spectators deeper into overcoats as it poured over the seats; and a man kicking a football from here would have to angle his kick down the sideline for maximum distance, keeping it low for the roll and hoping his ends got down in time.

The coach would tell a handful of kids that fact a thousand times before Thanksgiving. He walked down the field, stooped near the far sideline. No matter how many times they fixed the terra-cotta drains which ran beneath the running-track, and no matter how much they landscaped and tended the playing-field, there would always be a nearly unnoticeable declivity at this spot which might shake the footing from a broken-field runner on a day after rain or a stormy afternoon. A good quarterback would keep his plays away from here.

He walked into the end zone behind the south goal-posts and gazed at a corner out near the twenty-yard line. That corner lined up exactly over the middle of the crossbar for a place-kicker sighting over the posts at the SG gate in the stadium.

He was a general, and the stadium at Central University was a battlefield, his home battlefield for ten tough games in a tough league. This year he was as nearly ready for them as a football coach ever gets. Characteristically, he winced away from the thought.

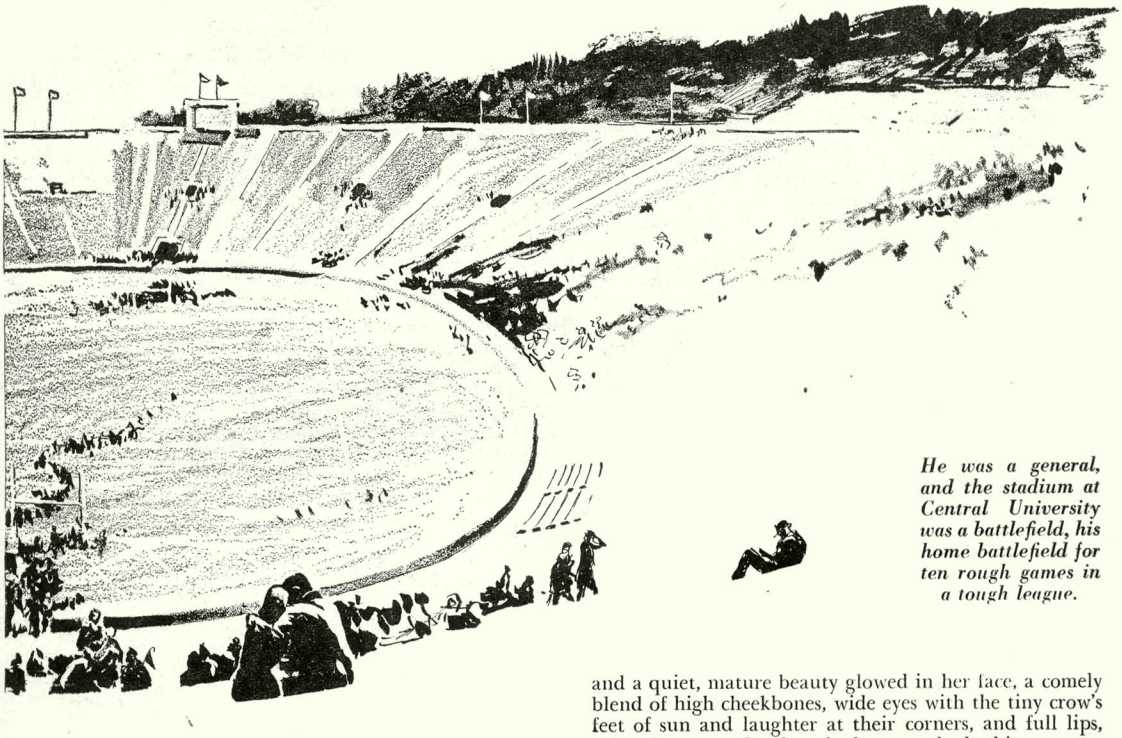
He let his eyes travel the length of the field again, lifted them far above the distant end zone at the other end of the field. That's where he'd put his spotters and the phones down to the bench. A good man there, watching the holes open in the lines and conning the shifting defenses of the opposition, was worth four more on the field. He chuckled. This year he wouldn't need four more men. He was loaded, barring injuries, of course, and scholastic difficulties, fraternity strife, girl trouble, accidents stemming from sheer animal spirits, possible cliques on the club, big heads from too-ardent press notices, alumni fervor and other allied hazards. He killed the chuckle. No successful coach has a right to count All-Americans before they are hatched.

His singular content was apparent to the woman who waited in the roadster at the end of the stadium tunnel which ran from the locker-rooms. "Place look good to you, dear?" she queried, and smiled.

He grinned. "Let's go home, baby. I haven't seen the kids since I left for camp a month ago, and I don't

The war was not over for Dane, though he was back in college and playing football—good football. For he had also taken on a job for the F.B.I. that was something special and important.

by CARL L. BIEMILLER



He was a general, and the stadium at Central University was a battlefield, his home battlefield for ten rough games in a tough league.

consider our meeting at the station a half-hour ago really seeing you."

She eased the car into gear.

"You're sure you don't want to visit the office first?"

He laughed softly. "I've got the office in my pocket in one little telegram," he said. "That E. R. Dane listed for Journalism II is Dipper Dane, the kid that burned the Big Nine to a crisp as a pre-war sophomore, and he's coming back to school. This school—not Purdue, North Carolina, Stanford or Penn—this school! And a sweeter present couldn't be had. With what I've got, we're going to be very rough, and maybe you might even wear roses in Pasadena next New Year's Day."

There were people in the Northeast Conference who claimed that John Evans Shaw, head coach of Central, was always rough even when fielding teams that averaged 145 pounds soaking wet. It was said that he could get more from his kids than they knew they had, that one year two graduate coal-miners from Wilkes-Barre went back to the mines and set new production records simply by imagining they heard his voice. An ex-All-American and a graduate of the pro ranks in the last days of the Canton Bulldogs, he was a quiet, serious, competent person with an innate understanding of his fellow-man, a fact which he proved to the complete satisfaction of the U. S. Navy during the first and only leave he ever took from the Central campus.

His wife let the car loaf slowly past the campus. She was a slim woman, trim and neat in a soft tweed suit, and a quiet, mature beauty glowed in her face, a comely blend of high cheekbones, wide eyes with the tiny crow's feet of sun and laughter at their corners, and full lips, relaxed now as she thought how much the big man enjoyed watching the campus. He liked the vaulting gray stone buildings and the things they represented. She knew the depths of this man, the gentleness and the deep appreciation of things permanent so well symbolized by the campus itself.

"How was camp?" she asked idly.

"Very good," he smiled. Shaw's summer camp for boys, which drowsed in the Berkshires by a secluded lake, was a lucrative by-product of his talent for handling young males. If, by a strange coincidence, his camp counselors represented the major portion of Central's football squad each year, and if, by the same coincidence, that squad worked daily on a practice field each camping day—well, who said good teams came easy? The setup saved the university the cost of a regular training site elsewhere.

"I wish," he added slowly, "that I could have had young Dane up there. In fact, I wish I knew a lot more about that kid than I do."

She was silent, awaiting, from long habit, the formation of his thoughts. "The war's been over three years now," he mused. "Where's Dane been? Of course, he was only an eighteen-year-old whiz when he left school, which makes him about twenty-seven now, a pretty old junior and maybe not quite the ball-player I think. We'll know more soon, though. I asked him to stop by the house this evening. He's supposed to be in town making some arrangements with the dean's office. Connator, our publicity man, got in touch with him."

The car slid between the two elms standing sentinel on the driveway and stopped. The red-brick dignity of the small Georgian house was marred only by two small boys dancing on the stone steps. "Pop, Pop, Pop, Pop," they yelled, making a war-dance chant of the words.

"H'ya, men!" he boomed. "It looks like a big year."

THE doorbell rang at nine, and Shaw answered it himself. Light streamed on the figure on the steps, a figure erect in a white linen suit which added bulk to shoulders and the illusion of size to the caller. "Mr. Shaw?" asked the visitor in a quiet voice. "I'm Eddie Dane."

"Come on in, Dipper," said the coach. "It's fine—fine of you to stop by."

"I hope you think so later, Mr. Shaw," said the caller. It was an odd remark, and Shaw savored it as he followed his guest into the living-room, a cool room with pale green walls and the August buzzing of late cicadas dull on the faint breeze which came through open windows.

Dane moved easily, with that almost liquid coördination which marks an athlete in the eyes of a trained observer as clearly as a brand. He bowed to Mrs. Shaw, gazing quizzically from a chair in a corner, and the big man's voice followed the movement. "This is Dipper Dane, dear," said Shaw. "Sit down, guy, and make it all comfortable."

There was ease and self-possession in the kid, thought Shaw as he watched his caller settle indolently into a chair, and a certain barely discernible air of command about him. He looked fit, to an experienced eye, almost too fine-drawn. There was maturity in his face, and a crisp tightness at the corners of his lips which implied that responsibility was no stranger. Shaw caught a faint smile in the young man's eyes. He grinned in answer. "I always look 'em over as if they were horses or something," he said; "it's a bad habit, I guess."

Dane's smile was warm and friendly, lighting his face and relaxing the corners of his mouth. "Weight, one eighty; height five, eleven," he said; "and when does your squad work out here?"

Shaw settled into his chair. "You've been away from the game a long time," he said. "Think you'll like it again?"

The nod was firm. "Never stopped liking it." His voice was low and steady. "But that wouldn't make much difference this time. I'm going to romp with your squad just the same, and maybe if some of the stuff is still there, it'll be your varsity."

Shaw grunted. "It figures to be a nice bunch of boys this season," he said. "A lot of rugged lads who haven't laid off the game for as long as you have, and who aren't exactly out of the knack either."

"I know your squad pretty well," said Dane evenly, "Maybe some better than you do. You run from the T, and you run tough, so I spent the last eight days working with the Eagles in the National Pro League, getting set for you. I even have a nice letter from Greasy Neale."

The big man's face clouded in the lamplight. There was something behind his caller's words. Characteristically, he waited for it to emerge. This was no cocky kid sounding off to impress him.

"In fact," continued Dane, "I know even more about you than an ordinary squad member might be expected to know, so I don't anticipate anything but coöperation when I tell you that our particular player-coach relationship is going to be slightly different than others you have known."

Shaw frowned, his brows pulling tight in puzzlement. "You talk a bit big, youngster," he said.

"Not me," said Dane. "This—" The badge was small in the palm of his outstretched hand, and the eagle was gold in the light. Shaw had seen similar ones in the past. He had once carried out a Navy assignment with the holder of such a badge.

He turned his head and cast a fond glance at his wife. "Honey," he said softly, "could you take about ten minutes to fix us a snack?"

"Don't get up," she said, interrupting their movement, and smiling. "I'll take fifteen minutes."

Dane grinned as she passed them.

"Well?" asked Shaw.

"We think one of Joe's boys has taken up football," said Dane. "And we think he may have been involved in sending signals of some of the Big Plays to the other team."

"I'll be damned!" said Shaw slowly. "This with maybe a Rose Bowl club, too. Those guys don't care what they do, do they?"

There was a long silence in the room as the two men looked at each other; then Dane's low-pitched voice continued: "Now and then one of our periodic departmental checks turns up an unsuspected result," he said. "The last man picked up was busy chasing atom dope as usual, and we found a letter. They're usually more careful than that, but everybody slips, I guess.

"The letter was from the guy's brother, a Central student, apparently a football player, and for all we know, the intermediate postoffice for data *en route* abroad. All of that is a lot to infer from one letter, but it was that kind of letter—so Dipper Dane is back in school."

"I take it, then," said Shaw, "that the guy you picked up was pretty good at his business, and that maybe there was more than a letter in his effects."

"He was no bum," agreed Dane wryly, "and neither is the cutie on this end, if he's still in business. You couldn't ask for nicer cover than a college football squad."

"Well, I don't say it isn't so," said the big man; "but it's a big school and a helluva big world. What do you want me to do?"

"Bring me up to date on college life," grinned Dane. "It's been a long time, and I'm an eager young man."

It was two hours before he left the house, however. And as he strode down the walk, a figure detached itself from the heavy tree shadows on the opposite side of the street and moved after him.

Chapter Two

BAKERSTON WAS NAMED FOR A MAN WHO CUT down all the prime timber from its surrounding terrain, gouged out as much iron ore from the nearby hills as was profitable, and later sold the denuded ground to the State for educational purposes. The community enjoyed a permanent population of some four thousand persons. When the academic facilities of Central University began to function each autumn, this vital statistic swelled to something more than ten thousand, and the local merchants spoke cordially to the local banker. While awaiting this annual miracle, the citizens of Bakerston spent their time removing the scars of the last student occupation and watching portents which might possibly affect the fortunes of Central's football team. Like Massillon, Ohio, and Green Bay, Wisconsin, Bakerston was pigskin daffy and unashamed of it.

It was the last town in the land in which to search for enemy spies, thought John Shaw. He winced at the purple description. Enemy spies were something in Oppenheim novels; and Communist football players sending atom data from the campus—the thing was incredible. Bakerston was a place where the young seasoned its youth with learning, where kids made love, friends, fond memories, and where they played rough games with a fine animal enthusiasm. It wasn't a place of plot, counterplot, treason and danger. The big man was realist enough to know, however, that the best disguise was the

appearance of the blandest innocence. Because no one could think of the sinister aspects of international cold war in Bakerston, somebody had.

There were few signs of it on Colwide Field, however, University classes began in the middle of September but football squad workouts on the practice field which abutted Central Lake across a green common from the stadium itself began September first, and the conflict on the cleat-chewed turf was already hot.

As Shaw ended his cross-town walk, he paused at the door of the stone field house at the north end of the field and gazed at his kids. At one corner of the limed expanse Buckets Dugan, his line coach, had a bunch of guards practicing cross-blocks and pull-outs on each other. He could hear Buckets' high-pitched voice yelling: "Drive, dammit. *Drive!*"

On the other side of the field Ainsley Ames, the backfield coach, and Tod Morgan, Shaw's first assistant, were working with kickers, sending tackles and ends down under the booming punts to smack down the backs returning the kicks. It was rough contact work, with full pads and headgear.

As Shaw watched, a high, lazy spiral drifted downfield with four men, two tackles and two ends, coming down under it.

The ball began its rapid descent, apparently falling short of the receiver, who stood relaxed and loafing as ends and tackles slowed. The kid was playing it off the hop, thought Shaw. He changed his mind. As the men sprinting downfield slowed and stopped, the receiver took one tentative step forward, burst into full speed, grabbed the ball, spun from one hasty clutch and streaked for the sideline in the clear. Outfoxed the dummies, grinned Shaw. He'd fix that later. He squinted. The receiver pulled from his run and casually heaved the ball back to the kicker without a loss of motion. The ball rifled thirty-five yards on a clean arc, and the kid turned to trot back into his position for the next kick. He was grinning, moving as smoothly as a cat. Shaw called to him, raising his voice in a shout that echoed above the chatter on the field. "Hey, Dipper," he cried. "Come here a minute." He leaned against the wall of the field house and waited. He knew a lot more about Dipper Dane than he had two weeks ago; and despite half a lifetime assaying men, the knowledge impressed him.

A precocious Ohio kid, Dane had entered Purdue at an age when most youngsters were busy being high school seniors—probably because of study habits formed under the influence of his late father, an engineering prof at MIT, mused Shaw. Young Eddie had made the freshman squad and jumped to the varsity as a sophomore, the year Tojo dumped the works at Pearl. His mother was dead; and when Dane, Sr., moved to Chicago for reasons later explicit in the war, and where he ultimately died from the effects of hard radiation, the Dipper had enlisted. He had showed so much natural aptitude as an infantryman that he graduated into the Rangers, where his talents later took him into a special branch of the O.S.S. His present Federal employment agency got him on loan at war's end for one or two specific assignments. This one, if completed, might be the last of the string, according to Dipper himself and Hamilton Connor, a grave-faced man, recently introduced to Shaw as a new history instructor at Central, the departmental supervisor on the case.

"What's on your mind, Coach?" grinned Dane.

"Your conference eligibility," snapped Shaw. "For some reason I like my guys to be clean as a whistle, with all the fuddy-duddy regulations of this league; and you seem entitled to two more years of college play."

Dane chuckled. "If I make the grade," he added. "I'm old for this stuff you're dishing out; and from one or two observations I've made, there seem to be a lot of guys besides me who plan to handle that halfback's job I want."

"Good ones, too," said Shaw quietly. "But I have a couple of affidavits you have to sign—just routine paper records for the conference secretary to make your return to this game all nice and formal. And following suggestions from a certain Rover Boy of this club, I am about to have this entire squad psychoanalyzed, just like the coaches of real big teams elsewhere in the country. We are going to look at cycloid dispositions, rathymia, nervous characteristics, introversion patterns; and when we are all through, I am going to give the data to Buckets Dugan, just because it is a nasty thing to do to poor Buckets, and because I won't know what it means, either."

"The tests will be conducted by two graduate students from the University of Chicago, I presume?"

"Two properly accredited psychiatrists," agreed Shaw gravely. "Come in and sign your papers, and blow back to work."

"You will agree, however, that this new and scholarly approach will make nice copy for the press, confirm your standing as the great student of the game—Fox of the North, they call you, don't they?—and also set the stage to ask a lot of otherwise batty questions," said Dane.

"Only suckers on a squad kid the coach," said Shaw evenly; but his eyes glinted as he spoke. "We've got a lot of work to do this afternoon yet." He waved Dane away with a casual arm motion, watched momentarily the easy, springy stride which carried him along. Then he turned and entered the field house. There *was* a difference in the Shaw-Dane coach-player relationship, he thought, his mind reaching back to the first evening he met the Dipper. For all the apparently disciplined ability and canny judgment Dane owned for the job he was pledged to do, and despite the seasoned reasoning he showed in the several quiet business sessions he had managed to hold with Shaw, there was still a coltishness in the kid, a wild exuberance and a grinning abandon which burst through at times, especially on the practice field. The Dane-Shaw player-coach relationship, was different, all right. The Central alumni, always in full cry, would be glad to know it sometime, preferably at the end of an undefeated season; but meanwhile the first game had yet to be played.

He walked into the tiny office, a combination locker and desk space he kept on the practice field—more, he thought, as a repository of old pictures of past heroes than anything else. He was going to grind offense today with three varying combinations of lines and backs, going right through the five basic sequences of plays that he used; variations sprang from them later as dictated by scouting reports and picture analysis of game movies. He could see plays and counter-plays in his head. That was why he did not notice the girl in the swivel chair behind his scarred desk.

"Boo!" she said.

"For goodness' sake," he muttered, "don't they ever get male reporters on that sheet of yours? You should be married and raising a family by now. Let's see—this is the seventh season. Surely that editor of yours has found a suitable replacement by now. How are you, Sally?"

"Mad," she snapped, "and sick unto death of that mimeo chatter your boy Connator has been pumping around about standard workouts. How was camp? What's with this Dane? Did Armbruster bust out last term, or is he back in grace? How bad do you figure to take Clinton Tech two weeks from now? And how's the family?"

"We pay a flock of guys to answer all that sort of thing for you," he said; "and the family's fine. Besides, the faculty manager generally invites the wire services and

your own metropolitan press up for a pre-season bull session which will be three days from now. Only you came early, as usual." His smile was open and warm.

"Fiddle-faddle," she said.

When Sarah Whittaker was an angular child, neighboring playmates, mostly boys, called her "Bricktop." She had that kind of hair then, as well as an unmistakable talent for spitting with uncanny accuracy through an aperture left by two departed frontal maiden teeth. No discerning male would take such liberties today. Miss Whittaker was a big girl, for the past few years one of Iron City's better sports writers—one of the few in the business, male or female, who really knew football. Miss Whittaker was also, in the parlance of a campus which knew her as an undergraduate, "stacked."

Iron City, the nearest metropolis to Bakerston, lay twenty miles away; and like Sheridan galloping to Winchester, Sally Whittaker made the ride several times a week during the autumn at the behest of the Evening *Independent's* sports editor, for information which she later poured through a typewriter. Shaw knew her well, knew her mother and father, both genial people perpetually amazed that a nice girl would choose a newspaper career, and continually hopeful that she might, at least, transfer her talents to the society section. Sally and his wife Molly were friends.

Shaw looked at her gravely. "Well," he said, "just so I can go on with my work and you can go on with yours, I think we'll be ready for Clinton. Most of my guys are shaping nicely, with Randy Perkins looking particularly well at quarterback. He's had that trick knee all straightened out, and he's doing more tricks than ever with the ball. He may be hard to hold this year. Ike Berg, the fellow who is still looking for your scalp for calling him the one-man Haganah last season, is going to be a father; and oddly enough, he is showing his delight by carving out the sole ownership of my right-guard job."

He paused. "You had the release on Dipper Dane, including his war record, and what they thought of him at Purdue a few years ago. He's in awfully good shape. He has a natural knack for our system, and he may help us plenty. He is a bit older than most of the other kids, and I don't know how that will work out. Incidentally, he's clean with the conference on playing status.

"I'll give this out at the press party later in the week, probably to my sorrow; but we're going scientific here this year too, and you might as well have it locally before the wire-service lads get playing with it. The whole squad is about to be psychoanalyzed. Not that I don't know my own kids, but it's part of an experimental project conducted by some graduate students at the University of Chicago, and it may help us learn more about handling boys. Tests will begin next week. That ought to hold you, Sally. You can stick around awhile and watch the gang if you want to, but I've got things to do. I even want to change my clothes, so scram."

The Whittaker smile was a thing to see. "You're a nice man, Mr. Shaw, and I'll find a spot out of your way on the field. You wouldn't have any idea what sort of tests will be used on your squad, would you? There's a story in the thing. And you wouldn't have any objections to introducing me to Dipper Dane either, would you? There might be another one in what brings a fellow like that back to school."

"Out, Miss Whittaker!" There might, at that, he thought as she left. . . .

They were working backfields as units, and lines as units, the linemen working blocking assignments in Shaw's basic trap plays over and over again, and the backs stepping through the same plays with no lines in front of them, faking and cutting endlessly.

Dane could feel the strain in the back of his legs and the sweat in his eyes. He could feel a sense of irritation, too, at the persistent coaching voices. "Dane," barked one, "don't deviate. Stay on your running course. Don't shift and don't vary. One step different, and you'll throw somebody's blocking assignment out. Dane—fake that ball. Hide it. Dane—take three steps, not two and jiggle, *three*—give the man coming back on the reverse time to confirm the deception before he takes the ball."

This was the stuff that made smooth ball clubs; and on each repetitive effort the coaches gave mental grades to each player. Later in the season when the game movies were available, each player would be graded as to technique and execution on each play, and the averages would determine who stayed on top of the jobs.

Dane was glad when Shaw raised his voice and summoned him out of the immediate area. The coach was standing with a girl. "Meet Miss Whittaker," he said quietly as Dane stopped before them. "One of the better sports-writers in these parts. *Independent*, in Iron City."

There was a brief moment when their eyes locked. Eddie Dane had the absurd impression that he'd never seen bluer ones, and then he was warmed in her full-lipped smile. "I'm happy to meet you, Miss Whittaker," he said gravely. "What do you think of the squad?"

"It's pretty early to tell," she said; "but having watched essentially the same bunch last year, I wouldn't be surprised if it did all right." There was a tiny straight line of smudge across the middle of his forehead where a helmet had rested earlier in the afternoon. She felt a curious urge to take her handkerchief and wipe it away.

"Miss Whittaker would like to talk to you later about your reasons for entering school again," said Shaw evenly. "She also wants to do something about our psycho quiz, so she'll be around. Okay for now." The words were a dismissal.

"It's been nice," said Dane. He turned and loped back to his unit. Sally watched him go, an intent expression in her eyes, and the merest suggestion of a pout at her lips. Shaw caught the look, and grinned. "Okay, Sally?" he asked gently.

She turned. "Fine, thank you, John. Maybe I can steal some of his time in a day or two, if it's all right with you. But I might as well take what I have back to the paper now. See you later."

There was an eight-column line across the sport section of the Iron City *Independent* the following day. Central Squad to Hold Skull Sessions for Science. . . .

In a small and tastefully furnished bachelor apartment on one of Bakerston's green side-streets, an instructor in medieval history tapped a hesitant finger on a chair-arm as he read the story. Presently he moved to a telephone, and in a neat, clipped voice called a number and delivered a message.

The following morning the body of Ernest Rogalski, Central liberal arts student, senior and second-string tackle on the football team was found on Lincoln Lane at the east end of town.

Rogalski had apparently been struck by a hit-and-run driver. The lane was dark at the sector in which the body was found. Towering elms made a tunnel there. Some protuberance, perhaps, on the death car had laid a deep indentation along the side of Rogalski's head.

Chapter Three

Bakerston's chief of police was fat, fifty-five and fatherly. His force, five permanent men and ten assorted part-time monitors, coped ably with the exuberant forms of juvenile delinquencies which passed for crime in the town. Major breaches of peace, especially those rarities which resulted in death, were handled by the Sheriff's office in Iron City. That office, as Bakerston's Chief Thornton frequently ex-

"Shaw, what do you think this is? It's war and it's going on all over the world."

plained, worked with the State police and the metropolitan force. Thornton's contribution to the Rogalski case was a sympathetic frown and a word of admonition to the driver of the ambulance which took the body to the Iron City morgue. "Take things easy," said Chief Thornton. "Go back to sleep, Pop," said the Sheriff's men. The State police lieutenant and two briskly efficient men ostensibly attached to the Iron City force said nothing to anyone at all, but they photographed and measured and probed for a hundred yards in each direction from where Rogalski's body was found.

Later they returned to Iron City, where their preliminary findings were typed and laid on a desk in a small office where the lean gray-thatched Hamilton Connor thumbed through them. Shaw, Dane and the two men who had accompanied the State police lieutenant sat in a grave semicircle across his desk. They listened.

Connor had a face like a hawk's, with sharply defined angular planes that were emphasized by a pair of eyebrows slanting oddly upward, brows that stubbornly refused to relinquish their original black, and which now contrasted sharply with the gray of his sleekly brushed hair. His nose was sharp, made even more knife-edged when seen in profile, by his habitually compressed thin lips. He owned an abiding, almost implacable patience which he frequently camouflaged by a waspish impatience for petty details, and a weary certainty of his own long proved ability. He owned also an evangelical surety in the department, and with it, a reputation for going to extremes both in using and in protecting his men.

"I don't like coincidences," he said. "It could be a perfectly plain instance of hit-and-run, an accident. It could have nothing to do at all with the reason we're here. It could—but I doubt it. The boy was a football player. Our lead on the Commie drop involved a football player. Obviously no kid young enough to enjoy getting his brains thumped around with Central's muscle men is going to have the sort of brains Joe's organizers value in a really key position. But he could have given us a lead."

"The first man you picked up?" queried Shaw softly.

"Was authentically dangerous and able. The tests on the letter Dane told you about revealed a partial and badly smudged print that was not his, however. If your Rogalski's prints match any part of it, all we have is a connection. If nothing matches, then all we have is a coincidence. I don't like 'em. Our best bet is to assume that this poor kid is still part of our picture, and dig back into every corner of his past for some other lead. If nothing turns up, then the whole thing is an accident, just as it appears to be—"

"With the exception of that skull wound," interrupted one of the strangers, "and the lack of the sort of skid marks a sudden brake puts on a road."

"Can't tell about real accidents," continued Connor. "That's what makes them all different. But look at it this way: Suppose the kid was the man we were looking for, but not the man we really want. Call him just a poor relation, with partial knowledge that showed signs of dangerous indecision. Maybe grief, rage, anything at all because we picked up his brother. . . . His brother's name was not Rogalski, incidentally. I don't know, but if I were on the other side and efficiently entrenched here, I wouldn't gamble. Maybe there'd be an accident."

"You don't think anybody could have tipped our hand?" asked Dane.

"Well, you always wonder. Frankly, no."

"While we're supposing," said Dane, "let's just figure it's been tipped anyhow, and that Rogalski is just a dead-end sacrifice which would take us nowhere, and that the real guy is still playing football—that maybe there isn't any head-man or head-men."

"I like his better," said Shaw quietly, nodding his head at the thin man. "I've been looking at my kids a long while."

"There has to be a reason, even for a plain accident," murmured the Dipper. "If we're still screened, then something new entered the situation."

"Grief, rage, emotional stress—what do we know?" The lean man spoke crisply. "And if that old and always lousy thing coincidence—well, sometimes they catch hit-and-run drivers too. The groundwork hasn't been done on that end yet."

The door to the office opened quietly. "Two fellows here from Chicago," said the figure in the doorway. "They're the guys the Department sent down to run the psycho tests on the football squad."

There was a long moment of silence. It was broken by the man behind the desk. "It could be," he said. "Why, dammit, it could be, at that."

"The dean's office notified Rogalski's parents of the accident this morning," said Dane. "His father is coming to Iron City." He paused.

"We'll look at him," finished the lean man. He nodded to the men in the doorway. "Come on in, fellows."

The sun across his shoulders held no warmth, thought Shaw as he and the Dipper left the building, sliding into the pedestrian traffic on the busy street like human cards

into an ever-shuffled animate deck. How long does a person know another person before realizing that all people conceal inviolate depths? Rogalski was an amiable twenty-three-year-old kid, a Polack puppy with an engaging grin. He had been on the squad three years, and if he had stayed around three more, he still wouldn't have learned offensive blocking well enough to play Shaw ball, although he was a coach's comfort on defense. Rogalski was a polite kid, a better-than-average student, a Sigma Nu, and a roughneck in the shower-room. Rogalski was a mine-country boy with an athletic scholarship and a part-time job in the library. . . . Rogalski was a corpse.

John Shaw found himself hoping the kid's death was pure blind chance, a freak happenstance, unfortunate, but—he groped for the word—wholesome. Certainly kids held odd ideas today, or maybe not odd, just different from those held by other kids in other days. Why not? It was a world looking for an emergency exit; but maybe it always had been. He wouldn't give a damn for a kid who didn't believe, at twenty-one, in changing the universe. But tainted kids, youth working in the dark for darker purposes, those kids didn't play games in the autumn sunshine, not rough, rock-'em-team games like football. Nothing could convince him otherwise. He felt a twisted flare of anger at Dane, at himself, at the suddenly confronted knowledge that he, like millions of others, didn't know much at all about the forces swirling through the times. Worse, he did; and like millions of others, preferred to ignore them as long as they did not encroach upon his own life.

"It stinks," said Dane. "It always does."

A sudden thought struck Shaw. "If Rogalski is the guy, your job is about over, isn't it? I mean with the team."

"You don't know my boss Connor very well yet."

Shaw visualized Connor, that lean keen man behind the desk in the small room. "I guess not; but I've seen some like him."

"Anyhow," said Dane, "we don't really know anything yet. We have to assume, especially when it's the obvious thing to do. Besides I'm a real student out for the team—don't forget that." He paused delicately. "That is, if being something else besides a squad member doesn't make it too tough—for you, I mean."

There was diplomacy in the man, thought Shaw, a nice sensitivity, and it lightened the savageness of his mood. He forced a grin. "You're looking pretty fair in there, Dipper," he said. "Let's move. I've got things to do back home."

"I cut a class or two myself today," remarked Dane succinctly.

They rode the twenty miles up the winding valley from Iron City to Bakerston in silence, with Shaw driving and Dane gazing fixedly at the rolling hills that had already begun to blaze with the yellows and oranges of the season. The tires buzzed on the black-top road with a hypnotic drone. Dane found himself remembering a half-forgotten instruction: *waiting is ninety per cent of the work.* He let himself relax somnolently in the corner of the seat. From the corner of his eye he could see Shaw's hands on the wheel. They were big, competent-looking, and at this moment, very steady.

It was late afternoon when they pulled up before the parking space adjoining the field house on Colwide. The squad had finished calisthenics, and was hard at work. "Hit the lockers," grunted Shaw as he slid out from under the wheel. "Plenty working time."

"Wait a minute," said Dane, his eyes reaching beyond the driveway to the field house. "Isn't that Miss Whittaker over by your office door?"

"It sure is." Shaw paused. "You might as well come along. I know what she's here for, and you can guess."

The girl was grave as they approached. Dane noticed that her hair was tucked up out of sight beneath a rumpled felt hat, noticed also that a neat tailored gabardine suit gave her an almost spinsterish air which aptly confirmed her present gravity. She ventured an exploratory smile at Shaw, nodded to Dane. "It's Rogalski," she said. "Timmy wants a follow on the accident story for sports. I told him you might not like it, but he insisted." She hurried her words: "I did a piece on him two years ago, you know, one of the ordinary squad features, but maybe you could add a statement."

"Come on in, Sally," said the big man. "You too, Dipper. I want to talk to you later."

They walked the short cleat-dappled corridors to Shaw's office. The coach yanked at a straight chair for the girl, negligently indicated a wall, against which Dane promptly leaned. "You've got all the necessary background on Rogalski," said Shaw. "You know as much as we do about the accident. The kid left the Sigma Nu house after dinner to take a little walk. . . . Well, he walked out Lincoln Lane and didn't come back. That's all we know. Whatever turns up you can get from the Iron City end later, if the police get anything. As far as football goes, you can say that Rogalski leaves a helluva lot of friends who'll be thinking of him. The kid was a credit to the squad. He would have been a good, consistent performer this year, a guy we counted on in that line. I don't know what else I can tell you, Sally."

"Did he have any special friends on the squad? Fellows he sort of played around with more than others?"

"Sure—Ziborsky, another boy from Pennsylvania. Rogalski was Polish, and so is Ziborsky. Jeffers, I guess—the two were always clowning around. Peterson, Daniels—I imagine they were his best friends, but I'd rather you didn't talk to them about it. Mention them if you want to, but after all, I can't see where it adds much to your piece."

"I understand his family is coming up to school," said Sally.

"Check with the dean's office or on your own end. I heard the same thing; but after all, there are regular college officials who handle occasions like this, and they aren't coaches."

"Is Rogalski's brother coming too? I imagine he'll take it pretty hard. He thought a lot of his brother."

"Did you know Rogalski's brother?" asked Dane smoothly and evenly.

Sally turned in the chair to face him, a puzzled crease on her forehead at the interruption. Shaw dropped a big hand over a pencil on his desk and rolled it idly, silently.

"Why, no," she answered. "I only met him once. He watched a practice here the day I talked to Rogalski two years ago. A skinny little man with a slight limp. I thought it was funny for him to have a football-sized relative, especially when he called him 'little brother'."

"I never met him," said Shaw.

"Why should you?" she countered. "You were busy somewhere. But I remember the day. As a matter of fact, Jimmy Calhoun was with me. It was the same day he shot squad pictures, and I think he took one of the two Rogalskis. I had some idea of using a big-and-small shot, but the desk didn't see it."

"There wouldn't be a print around your office, would there, Miss Whittaker?" asked the Dipper.

"Lord knows," she replied. "Newspaper offices are full of useless pictures. I had a print once; maybe it's in my desk; maybe Calhoun has one in some old bin. What is this?"

Shaw was silent. He stared at a picture on the wall. Dane made the decision.

"Some of us would like to know a little more about Rogalski," he said simply. "I wonder if you'd mind if

I rode back to Iron City with you. I'd like to pick up that picture if it's available anywhere."

There was undisguised surprise on Sally's face. "Not at all, Mr. Dane," she said.

Chapter Four

SALLY WHITTAKER HAD THE VIRTUE OF KNOWing when not to talk, a perspicacity born of good taste and abetted by sound reportorial experience. She and Eddie Dane walked to her small coupé in silence. She slid her long slim legs under the wheel, yanked off her hat and stabbed a pert brown oxford at the starter. The sun lighted a bronze glow in her hair. "I've got to stop by the dean's office for a minute," she said, "and then pick up a tank of gas."

"You're doing us the favor," said Eddie. "I sure appreciate it."

She drove with the detached competency of long habit, flashed him a half smile as she slammed the car door and headed for the steps of the dean's office building. He watched her, noticed the square set of her shoulders, the way her skirt clung flat at her hips, rounding in the right places. Some nice guy had probably latched on to that a long time ago, he thought. A girl like Whittaker could line 'em up like tenpins and bang 'em down with one of those full-lipped grins. *I would like to put both hands in that flame hair and kiss her dizzy.* The thought was a mutter, and he felt sheepish at its escape. *Keep your mind on your work, Dane. The gal's bespoke and halfway to the altar for all you know.*

The job came first, and maybe this was all a mistake. Sally Whittaker was a reporter and a smart girl. She was already wondering about his interest in a two-year-old picture, and the fact that Shaw had stepped out of character by letting him sit in on the interview. Let many more people in, and Connor would want to know why they didn't run ads in the papers. But suppose the picture was the link that put Rogalski in the case, so what? For all they knew, they were chasing a cold trail that ended with their last known connection. The quarry, if still alive, could sit tight. He doubted if the cell, if such a thing existed, would disband and vanish. The background was too good.

Forever, and ninety-nine per cent of always, these things were dull. Dig and wait, dig and wait, then guess and hope. He had once sensed a romance in the work. Maybe it still existed but experience had dulled perception for him. Most assignments were a shuffling of papers, a dull erosion of shoe-leather.

It was a gray mood, but it lightened as Sally Whittaker came down the steps, crossed the strip of paving and got into the car. "Wasn't too long, was I?" she queried brightly. "One more stop for gas, and we go. Okay?"

Rocco Arrisia, a sparrow of a man who had been around town since a hasty departure from the old country after a brush with authority near the turn of the century, was the proprietor of one of Bakerston's two service stations. He poked his head at the car window as they rolled up his driveway to a battery of gas pumps. "Fill 'er up, Miss Sally?" he asked, rolling an ancient, if still discriminating Latin eye at the hem of her upriding skirt. He peered closely at Dane, and chuckled. "Thissa a new cute one you got, Miss Sally. He'sa look nice."

Eddie laughed with her, noting the faint tinge of crimson at the tip of her ears, and the unashamed lilt in her gayety. "Ten will do it, Rocco," she said, "This is a friend, Mr. Dane, a football player."

"Ho-ho," chortled the wispy man, bustling to the rear of the car.

"How many new cute ones do you trot in here a week, Miss Whittaker?" ribbed Dane lightly.

"Make it 'Sally,' shall we? There isn't too much formality in this part of the country. And to answer your question, I'm afraid not enough to please Rocco. He's been trying to marry me off since I went to school here nine million years ago. He takes a dim view of single women."

"How's he making out with his project, Sally?" There was a shadow of gravity in the banter, and she caught it and turned to meet his gaze directly.

"Not too well, Eddie," she said. "I'm fussy, I guess."

He felt fine, and the grin that broke white across his face proved it; there was a small nest of laugh lines at the corners of each eye.

"Send the charge to the usual spot, Rocco," she said as the little attendant popped up beside the car again like a wrinkled brown puppet. "Good-by."

They loafed through Bakerston, out to the curving spread of the four-lane black-top State highway which linked the community with Iron City. There was a curious, utterly comfortable, shared ease between them.

"What are you doing back in school, Eddie?" she asked idly.

He leaned his head back on the top of the seat in an intimate form of indolence. "Studying journalism, playing football, improving the shining hour with Sally Whittaker."

"According to Central's publicity bureau, you're a big war hero."

"Yep. I got a ribbon and an honorable discharge."

"What have you been doing since?"

"Working for the Government. Small job, and four-fifty per diem while traveling. There's no future in it, and my war bonds won't last forever. Besides, all the Danes are educated."

"Are you really a hot football player, Eddie?"

He laughed. "What did Shaw say when you asked him? And wouldn't I look like the ham of all the world if I said yes?"

Her lazy chuckle matched his own. "Coach John Shaw, when queried about his newest squad addition Dipper Dane, the former sophomore sensation at Purdue, said, quote, he might help us if he isn't too senile. He did not add, if Dane can make the grade with a gang of backs already four deep."

"The guy's a love, isn't he?"

"John Shaw is a great gentleman; and from what I've observed, he thinks well of you. He must, to excuse you from practice like that. Why do you want Rogalski's picture with his brother?"

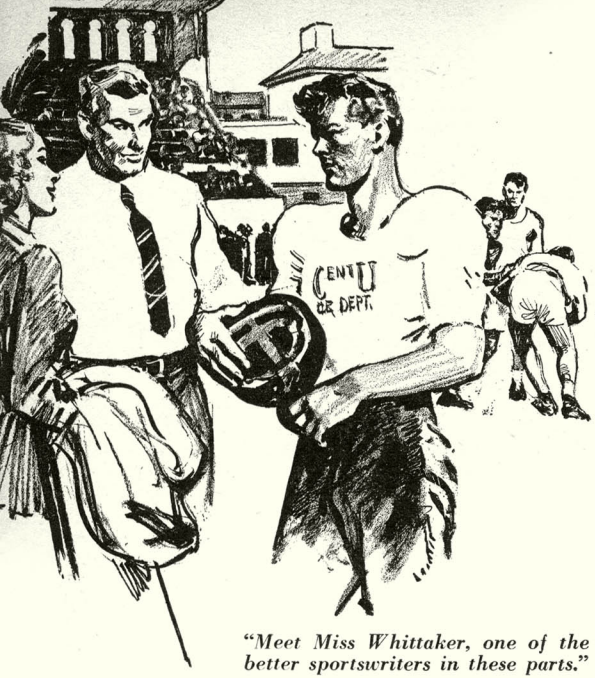
He had been waiting for it, unconsciously knowing that it would come naturally, conversationally, and there was no surprise in her query. His answer was equally easy, and he did not bother to lift his head. "It sort of helps to look at a guy's relations; and a few of us thought it might be nice to drop notes to the kid's family. You know how these things are." There was a vague tinge of challenge in his voice.

"No," she said, "I don't. In fact, I think it's pretty odd. There wasn't anything strange about the accident? I mean—no scandal. . . . I don't know what I mean."

"How would I know?"

"Oh, well, if John Shaw wants it," she said. "You're just saying it isn't any of my business. Okay, it isn't." She smiled at him, taking her eyes from the road briefly. "Where do you live when you're home, Eddie?"

THEY chatted softly, sporadically, through the gathering dusk. The lights of Iron City dappling the lower end of the valley peered through the perennial smogs which overlay the mill areas, the smog which gave the *Independent* building, when they reached it, a dull and velvety cast. A red neon sign from the roof cast a garish glow at the entrance as Sally cut the car into a vacant space at the curb which was neatly reserved by two no-



"Meet Miss Whittaker, one of the better sportswriters in these parts."

parking signs. "Courtesy of the Police Department," explained Sally, "for the press."

There was no activity in the sports department which abutted the almost deserted city room as they emerged from the elevator. But a shirt-sleeved figure with its feet propped upon an open desk drawer flipped a casual greeting as Sally approached. She made a face at it, turned to Eddie and said: "How would you like to meet my boss?"

"Sure," he answered.

The figure rose as they walked across the paper-littered floor, stretched lean and tall. "This is Timmy Watts, sports editor," said Sally, "and he's working late in hopes of taking me to dinner, aren't you, Timmy?"

There was a pleasant quizzical grin on the thin, almost too long face which Dane found engaging. He responded with an understanding smile. "And this is Dipper Dane," she continued, "one of J. Shaw's lads. I promised to dig out an old print for him."

"She giving you trouble, Dipper?"

"Not yet, but I think I'm a bit afraid she might. Nice to meet you, Timmy. Can I join you for dinner?"

"No, Dipper, you cannot," said Watts gravely. "I always work this late despite the fact that we put our stuff away by four-thirty each day; and besides my wife always insists that I call her at least two hours in advance before bringing home guests. Much as I'd like to ask you out, one of the kids has croup. Do you begin to suspect Miss Whittaker of anything, Dipper?"

"Doesn't she have to write anything?"

"This is an evening newspaper. She has nothing to produce until the weird hour of seven-thirty tomorrow morning."

"Except a picture for Mr. Dane," interrupted Sally. "Stop it, both of you."

"You have until then, Dipper." Watts kept his face grave. "I wish you well." He strolled off toward the city room, waving a negligent hand as he went.

Dane beat her to the remark. "I don't have any ideas now that I haven't had all afternoon," he said. "Could I take you to dinner?"

"Why not?" she said after a brief pause. "I'll call home before we leave here. Now, here's my desk, and that beat-up old metal file cabinet is crammed with junk, stuff we've used in layouts and stuff we've filed to forget. I think it's our best bet."

They worked through two of the packed drawers, Dane crouched easily on his toes like a baseball catcher, Sally leaning from a chair, her shoulder touching his occasionally; and there was a clean fragrance at his nostrils born of her nearness that stirred him.

"Well," she said, "if it isn't in here, maybe photographic has one. They keep bins of the stuff up there."

They worked patiently through prints of skeet competitors, swimming stars, ball players. There were shots of the Indianapolis speedway, Olympic sprinters, visiting banquet speakers and racehorses. There was a file of Central squad pictures, most of which were air-brushed and cropped, including one of John Shaw with his two sons shown sitting on the bench. There was a batch of this year's Central squad still in the envelope in which it had been dispatched from the athletic public relations office, and Dane found his own face under a youthful crew haircut with a highlight across the slightly thickened bridge of his nose. "Glug!" he muttered. "Who's the prize-fighter?" There was a copy print of Hugh Duffy, gray and chubby, holding a commemorative bat, a group illustrating the local Soap Box Derby, another limning a golf tournament. "Ever see such awful junk?" asked Sally. "There are heaps like this in at least five other departments on this paper. Nobody ever throws anything away."

The print was there.

Rogalski was chubby. He beamed like an oversized kewpie, his arm draped over the shoulder of a much smaller man. There was a crack across the picture as if it had, at one time, been folded carelessly, but the features of both figures were clear and distinct. There was a rubber-stamped *Independent* on the back of the print, a pasted yellow strip of paper with a caption: *Ernest Rogalski, Central tackle candidate, and Louis Rogalski, his brother, a visitor to the Blue and Gold workout today.* There was a white smudge across the background of the print as if a careless photographer had grabbed it out of the hypo solution while still wet.

Dane could sense Sally's intent look as he gazed at the print. Both of the faces caught by the camera were familiar to him. He felt a small cold finger of excitement at the base of his spine. He turned to meet Sally's stare. It was direct, curious, questioning and she did not avert it. He smiled gently.

"Where do you want to eat, Sally?"

There was a warm highlight in his gray eyes which turned them an impish green, she thought, and somehow she felt a twinge of concern for him, a feeling she pushed away instinctively.

"Just dinner," she said. "You've got to get a bus back to Bakerston, you know."

"Just dinner," he agreed; "and do you have an envelope I could carry this in?"

Chapter Five

THE FIELD-HOUSE LOCKER-ROOM HAD A COZY quality not yet indigenous to the newer, larger, less-used facilities of the big stadium which the squad overran for games only. Time had had more opportunity to coat its bilious green walls with the aura of male sweat, wintergreen rubbing oil and shower-room steam. The newer concessions to male hygiene—a foot spray device designed to prevent athlete's foot, and a whirl bath designed for the hydraulic message of tender muscles—sparkled with a chrome incongruity.

A bank of tilted rubbing-tables, the exclusive province of old Dan Dooney, Central's trainer, lined a third wall.

Old Dan, a slight, stooped figure with a pair of enormous hands, had worked out charley-horses for three generations of Central football players. He dabbled in liniments and probed sore muscles. He was an expert analyst of grunts, knowing exactly how much good or evil he was accomplishing at any given task by interpretation of the soul fiber which accompanied the grunts of his subject. Old Dan also had a sterling reputation as a student of hair; wherever it grew thickest, that was where the adhesive tape went.

Old Dan was analyzing grunts as the squad filled the room at the end of practice. The grunts were being prodded from Ike Berg, two hundred pounds of regular guard. Between grunts, Berg was holding a noisy conversation with Ab Reichen, another lineman. "I don't know what the hell from these guys," he said. "When the dirty bastard tells me what he's got in mind—me a father in two months—I told him to go to hell. Shaw don't win this conference with fairies."

Reichen listened reflectively, scooping a pellet of turf from his navel. "They're supposed to get inside your mind. It's all sex with those jokers, like the psychos in the Army."

Dane was tired. He leaned against the locker door and let the swirl of talk flow around him. The squad's psychoanalysis, held the previous afternoon, was a dominant subject. Rodrigues and Schwartz, two junior backs, both of whom ran from the halfback spot Dane wanted, were yanking jerseys over each other's head beside him. "How'd you make out with all the word-association tests?" quizzed Schwartz. "Can you believe in God and be a Communist? How often do you daydream? Oh, brother!" "Heave the damn' thing, will you? You got me wrapped like a cocoon."

Dane stirred. "Hey," he said. "Help me with mine, will you, Roddy?"

"Lean up, Dipper. You dead? How 'bout a coke downtown?"

"Can't," said Dane, "and neither can you. Tod Morgan wants the backs to hang around a half-hour after we dress. There's a notice on the board. He wants to chart a new sequence for our play books."

Football under John Shaw was something more than a casual game. Every member of the squad owned a loose-leaf notebook that bulged with such mimeographed instruction as "How to play guard" "What to do with a 5-3-2 defense" "The technique of L-blocking, cross-shoulder blocks, and downfield brush-blocks." The notebooks also held individually charted assignments for each particular player on every Shaw play. One of Shaw's famous quotes succinctly stated the reason for his play books. "Dumb guys don't play ball for me."

"Let's hit the water, then," said Schwartz. He yipped shrilly.

It was the horseplay, the old to-hell-with-it, that made this game worth-while, thought Dane, the water streaming down his back in the open shower-room. But it wasn't quite the kid stuff any more. He could hear Sapio and Jeffers, hidden across the tiled room in steam, arranging a bridge game with their wives for the evening. Both of them lived in trailers on the fringe of Bakerston, as did Berg; both had served in the same outfit overseas, and were back in school with G.I. funds which they fattened with athletic-sponsored jobs. The G.I. guys were thinning from college squads, as they were thinning from the campuses of the land, and the legit kids were replacing them. But Central had its share. Dane wasn't the only "old man" playing football. Blackhern, a lineman, was thirty and had two kids.

Dane cocked a water-logged ear at something Piskoti and Wienstock were discussing at his left. "So it's a week to the Clinton game, and the jerks from Iron City are down here figuring odds and points already. Shaw will have your uniform if you talk to them, though, and bang goes your scholarship! They tell me a guy can pick up a hundred a week just supplying squad dope, injuries, and that kind of stuff. They don't ask you for anything crooked. No throw-the-game jokes—they know better; but that inside information helps them trim a million suckers. You wait—I bet a sawbuck you'll be combing those guys outta your hair. I also bet you John Shaw crosses 'em at least twice this season on points. They hate his guts."

Dane pushed the water from his hair with a useless gesture and left the shower-room. Randy Perkins, first-string quarterback, stopped him. "I was looking for you," he said. "C'mon in this corner a minute."

"Let me get dried off."

"Ah, to hell with it! I want to show you something." Randy yelled down the room: "Hey, heave me that ball a minute." A student manager pitched it up, and Perkins took it in a one-hand grab as smooth and unconscious as breathing.

Dane had never seen a quarterback fake a ball like Perkins. The guy was as devious as a Politburo poker session. A dark, rangy senior, playing his last season for Central, he had worked, polished and honed his motions under the center until Shaw himself couldn't tell when he had finally committed the ball. He took a magician's delight in hoaxing the opposition, and he needled every other back on the squad until they at least caught the rudiments of his magic.

They stood naked in a quiet eddy within the corner of the room. "Look, now," said Perkins eagerly. "When you take that hand-off on 63-play, don't lift your elbow for me. Your natural running motion will lift that arm enough for me to slide it to you. Right now you're conscious of the play, and you'll tip it sure as hell if you try to make me a bucket for the ball. Don't even pull your outside hand up. When that agate goes in, you'll automatically squeeze down on it. You stop worrying. I've watched you run, and as long as you take your right steps before breaking for the hole, we can slick this down so your own mother won't know you've got that ball. . . . Wait a minute." Randy looked down the room. "Peterson," he shouted. "You're supposed to be a center. Here a minute."

"I appreciate this," said Dane warmly.

"The hell with that," grinned Perkins. "You'll appreciate it a lot more when you go all the way for a score some sunny day against State." He turned to Peterson, a grimacing, sweating, naked figure. "You'll get your bath, but right now I want to show Dipper something. Snap this a time or two, will you?"

"I ain't handed you that thing enough today!" growled the center. "I got to give it to you all night too." He winked at Dane.

They moved in the corner like a Greek frieze of some nude Olympian ballet, walking through the play. "You see what I mean?" asked Perkins. "Even when you walk, you swing your arms. You gotta—everybody does. Now, when you jog a little, the arm comes up more. Got it?"

It was the detail, thought Dane, the everlasting picayune pecking at detail that made Perkins so good, made all Shaw teams as good as the material would allow.

"Okay," grunted Peterson. "I quit. I had it. Work the rest out tomorrow." He tossed the ball down, and watched it bounce into a puddle near the shower-room door. "Fumble!" he yelled, and laughed as a half-dozen heads came up in automatic response.

Dane went back into the showers; he got wet and thus warmed briefly, he emerged and toweled. He finished dressing, looked up and caught Shaw's eye. The big man was standing in the doorway of the short corridor that led from the locker-room to his office. He had been surveying the room, a faint smile on his face. It was still

there as Dane's eyes met his glance. It vanished. Shaw gestured, and Dane walked over to him.

"Your friend Connor wants you to meet him in Iron City tonight." There was an irritable bite in the big man's voice which Dane found unusual, and at variance with the long-disciplined patience of the man. "After the meeting with Morgan will be time enough," he continued.

Dane's glance was as good as a flat question.

"It seems that you are in tonight's paper in a cute little story by Sally Whittaker. She makes a reference to your hopes for making my number one halfback spot, goes on to say that you are delighted at the opportunity of playing for me, that you think so much of the squad in general that you even came up with her to get a picture of Rogalski and his brother so some of the team could write to his parents and express sympathy, and that this is the old Central spirit."

"So I gambled," said Dane evenly, "and was right on the picture. Because she was curious, and because I couldn't tell her anything, she slides this in to prove to me that she realizes that a thing so unimportant certainly could be published."

"That's about it. But you're only playing football for me. You're working for Connor, for something even more important than Connor; and from my limited words with him awhile ago, he thinks you've upset the wagon."

Dane felt a warm glow at the base of his neck.

"Let's wait for him to tell me, shall we?" He regretted the words as soon as they left his lips.

Shaw's face grew wooden. "Sure," he said somberly. "I think I'd duck Sally Whittaker for a while, though. You can duck the play session too. I'll see that you get sheets. Go over them when you get time."

The Dipper took a half pivot step away and paused. "I'll check with you later."

"Do," said the big man crisply.

Chapter Six

SHAW, DECIDED EDDIE DANE AS HE LEFT THE locker-room and headed across the common and downtown to his room, was about one more incident away from booting him off the squad—an attempt which might prove embarrassing, especially if Connor decided otherwise. He hadn't helped any by that one flash of temper, either. He gathered that Connor had been more than waspish on the phone.

It was the tension, he thought, the old groping that made any phase of this business a game of blindman's buff which was seldom completed. Connor was doubtless right. The reference to the Rogalski picture put him out in the open, left the quarry still in comfortable, knowledgeable darkness—unless, of course, a definitely known scratching at the trail could build panic pressure. It was worth considering, and might explain the cold removal of young Rogalski if such pressure was mounting. He felt a flash of irritation at Sally Whittaker, curbed it with the equally irritating realization that the incident was his own fault. Shaw was steady, discerning. The thing to do was to stay away from Sally. Dane was at Central to do three things: first, his job; second, make the football team, and third, to further an education. The combination, an outgrowth of the job itself, was enough for any man to handle.

He lengthened his stride through the late dusk, reached the bottom of a slope and cut into Bakerston's Main Street. He swung off it, past the Blue and Gold Hotel and then retraced his steps to enter the lobby. Might as well see her story, he thought, and bought the Iron City *Independent*.

Freshmen and sophomores crowded dorms at Central. More affluent undergraduates enjoyed the housing privileges of some twenty-five fraternity houses scattered throughout the town and campus. Other earnest students, some with wives and families, lived in trailers, apartments and rented houses when lucky. Still others, Dane among them, found haven in Bakerston's traditional, frequently gracious, rooming-houses.

Dane's was a big frame structure set back from the quiet street. It was the sort of house that proper families with the proper number of children filled in the Nineties, and its chalk-white, sternly square appearance had a Victorian respectability equaled only by the character of the bird-like woman who owned it. There was no use telling Mrs. Lloyd Canfield Pennypacker that the elms which crowded the house to send exploratory roots into the cellar, and questing branches into the second- and third-floor rooms, were storm and plumbing hazards. They had always been there, and would remain. Mrs. Pennypacker furnished rooms for exactly eight young gentlemen each year—no more, no less. Each student had his own privacy. Mrs. Pennypacker made certain that each understood that she was also to have hers.

Dane's room was on a corner of the second floor. He let himself in the front entrance of the house, closed the thick fanlighted doors behind him. He walked down the heavily carpeted hallway, up the stairs which formed a two-flight L, and turned down the carpeted hallway toward his room at the front of the house. Inasmuch as Mrs. Pennypacker personally interviewed her eight young gentlemen before letting her rooms, few of them were ever locked, and Dane opened his door and stepped in without pause. . . .

The room tilted slowly, spun sidewise. It gathered momentum, seemed to pick up speed and whirl. He fell into the cone of the spin, fell a long distance into a blinding patch of light. He never felt the sudden blow or the grinding impact of the rug on his face.

It was a tunnel on a mountainside, high up, above the timberline. It was dark, and he was crawling toward a bead of light. There was wind, a steady rushing draft pouring past his eardrums; it blurred his vision and made the light bead wabble in an eerie dance. He crawled, a curiously leaden movement in his sapless legs, and the light steadied and the wind seemed to die away, returning only now and then with its former rush.

Then the wind was the blood pounding across his temples, and the light was framed in the window of his room. He was on one knee, still on the floor. He was trying to rise, and his body was heavy and alien. He made it, and staggered to the bed, sat soddenly and brushed an exploratory hand across the back of his head. It came away sticky, and where it had touched, there was a growing, burning pain.

Dane sat a long while, felt the strength come back to his legs, sensed the fuzzed edges leave his mind. Sapped! He heaved to his feet and wabbled to the shower. He turned the cold-water tap and leaned his head into the stream, and the water ran down his neck, drenching his collar, turning his necktie into a soaked pulp and seeping further down his shirt. It refreshed him. He pulled off the wet clothing, toweled the back of his neck carefully, avoiding his head. It was still dark in the room, and he refrained from turning on the light. The glow from an outside street light butting through the elm branches was enough. He dressed again, fumbling a clean shirt from a drawer. The pain had become a throbbing now, but he was steady. Only a tremor at the back of his thighs signaled weakness, and he braced against it, avoiding thought as such.

THE house was still, and only the dim wall light at the stair landing brightened the hallway as he left his room and walked gingerly down the steps, through the downstairs hall to the door. The door was heavy and he strained to open it. It seemed to be too much trouble to

close it tightly as he passed through into the night air. He walked down the flagged walk to the street.

There was an automobile at the front of the house, a black Chevrolet sedan. Its lights were off, but its motor was idling, and Dane had a fleeting moment of disaster as he stared at it. He backed at the end of the walk, paused in the heavier shadow of a bush. The door of the car was opening, and a man got out. It was Connor, and the wan, vagrant illumination from the street light emphasized the gravity of his hawklike face.

Dane stepped from the shadow to meet him.

"You're about four hours late," said Connor. Dane thought his voice came from the bottom of a well. He pitched forward, and Connor caught him as he fell. This time there was no tunnel.

Chapter Seven

JOHN SHAW WAS BLUNT: "I AM GOING TO make noises exactly like a coach, a father and a family man; then you can reconcile what I have to say with patriotism or any other ideas you have in mind."

Connor and Dane exchanged glances. They were seated in Shaw's office. It was lunch time, and the adjoining locker-room was silent. Only the thin lines at the corners of Dane's mouth and the receding egg at the back of his head marked his previous night's adventure. There were faint violet smudges beneath Connor's eyes to mark his sleeplessness. The smudges warred with the set of his jaw. They listened to Shaw.

"You, Dipper, are a shining mark, from what happened last night, a target I don't want around the squad. Don't misunderstand me. This has nothing to do with your football ability. You can make my team. All things being equal, you would, and I'd be damn' glad to have you. But you've got a job to do; and it's a big one, I know. I think you guys have proved by now that my squad is clean. That was Dipper's first chore. The Rogalski kid was it, and I think he was just a nice youngster on the fringe because of his brother. Okay.... Your psycho boys went through their motions, and it looked like a good idea at the time, but they didn't turn up anything I couldn't have told you about my kids, and neither did all your preliminary research.

"But when Sally Whittaker broke the fact that Dane wanted the picture of Rogalski's brother, whoever thought they had cut off that source of information when they removed young Rogalski, decided that it might be smart to get rid of anyone else snuffing down that alley. Dane shows. They must know he doesn't work alone, but he still shows, and he's on my team. What do you think it would do to my guys, to the university, if the Dipper were knocked off in a game, for instance? Connor, you know that's not fantastic. Hell, there was a plot set up to bang off a President at an Army-Navy game once!

"Furthermore, it's enough trouble to keep crooks and gamblers away from this game without adding political thugs. Besides, it's pretty clear that anybody associating with Dane is going to be looked over." Shaw paused and gazed directly at Dane. "That's the real reason I told you it would be smart to stay away from Sally. I had others, too."

Connor lighted a cigarette and blew smoke at the window in a straight, forceful line.

"For all I know, they might be conning my family, my own children, and certainly some of the veterans on the squad," continued the big man softly. "Damn it, this is a Rose Bowl team, a great bunch of kids—" He stopped again, waved a hand in a futile gesture. "I had to say it," he muttered.

There was a long silence. Connor stabbed his cigarette into an ashtray, his lips a tight, bloodless line. When he spoke, his breath rushed forth with a pent-up gust. He controlled it, softened his voice.

"What do you think this is, Shaw, pat-a-cake? It's war, and it's going on all over the world. You think we don't know everything you've told us? Now I'm going to tell you something, and you might as well brace, because you're not going to like it: First, we appreciate your really fine coöperation so far. It's no more than we expected, from your record. Eddie Dane can understand your feeling as far as your football team goes better than I can. But if I had to stop football here at Central completely, disband the whole damn' bunch and walk over you too for one tiny, measly scrap of help in getting my job done—well, I'd do it. Rose Bowl! Great God!"

There was a sincere if somewhat forced smile on Shaw's face; there was a grave, earnest timbre in his voice. "I told you I had to say it." There was reasoned truth in his words. "I knew what the answer would be, too." The swivel in his chair creaked as he turned to gaze out the window, past the practice field, across the sloping common to the tree-clad spires of the campus, and beyond into the drowsing town. There, in his view, was permanence, quiet grace. It wasn't something to be mixed up in a lot of evil, for all he knew, some tenth-rate melodrama.

"I've got a headache," said Dane quietly.

Connor snorted. "You've got a concussion, and according to the doc, if you didn't have the physical apparatus of a mule, you'd have a damn' sight more. The guy who swung the billy knew his stuff. An inch lower, and you'd be gambling for it in an oxygen tent. You're to take things easy the rest of the week until the doc gives us another check."

He swung again to face Shaw: "John, let me finish this. Your reasoning is wrong, you know. I don't think Dane was slated for that bash on the head deliberately. I think he walked into somebody who was examining his room. I don't think they're dumb enough to assume that he might have the Rogalski picture. I merely think that this outfit is so well entrenched and organized that they take a quiet peek at anybody these days—in fact, from the time we nabbed the guy on the first business end. That goes especially for new football players this season, and it must go for any new faces around the campus, probably including my own.

"I do think that they know we've traced their operations to this area, and it isn't new news exactly. This is an industrial center. The university just happens to be an appendage. Call it just a part of the cover, with the real work being done down there in the city, in the mills. I don't think, for instance, that we are going to turn up actual villains with blunt instruments or secret diagrams in their hands. Not unless all previous patterns reverse themselves. We are just going to dig, pry and dig some more. The regional office is checking normal 'front' groups in the area. What we can't see, we'll keep worried. I think there's a fair amount of worry going on, and that may give us a break."

DANE concentrated on Connor's words. He knew valid experience when it spoke, had worked with it before. He noted the rapt interest in Shaw's face.

"That's why," continued Connor, "Dane is staying with your squad, why he is going to bust a gut making your team, and why he is going to stay right out in the open." There was a soft, ruthless, disciplined, intonation in the man's words. "He makes pretty bait just in case somebody does get foolish. Meanwhile, we go on working with what we have."

"Nothing personal in this, of course," grunted the Dipper, wishing peevishly that Connor had his head for the rest of the day.

Connor rose, stretched his arms over his head, then dropped a hand on Dane's shoulder lightly, squeezed affectionately. "I hear that part of the journalism course

in this school includes getting hit on the head from time to time. Don't be surprised if you get a definite exercise in that direction now and then." He walked to the door. "So long, Shaw," he said, and paused. He looked coolly at Dane, a dancing light leavening the weariness of his eyes. "Watch your step, rockhead. If it's any help to you, we're helping you watch it a bit more closely from now on."

Shaw gazed speculatively at the doorway after Connor left. "I'm getting old, I guess," he said softly. He turned to Dane, his face softening. "Listen, Dipper, how would you like me to call old Dan? You can go over to the gym, and he'll give you a nice, soothing rubdown. Might help that headache. Then you can roll over and take a nap there. I'll pick you up after practice, and take you out to the house for dinner. I don't want you to work out the rest of the week, anyhow. . . . What do you say?" He reached for the phone as Dane nodded. "Take your play book in case you get restless. Who knows? If Clinton isn't too tough Saturday, maybe you'll get a chance to stretch a little, at least enough to keep you interested."

Dane grinned. "I'm sorry about that crack in the lockers the other day," he said. "Just a little edgy."

"Sure," agreed the big man softly. "Get going."

AFTER Dane had closed the door behind him, Shaw reached into his top desk drawer and took out a wide loose-leaf book. It looked like an accountant's ledger, and indeed it was a summation of assets and liabilities in terms of football manpower. Each player was represented in the book by a dossier several pages in length, a report completely current, and kept so by daily coaching analysis made by Shaw's staff. Each individual section held a capsule summary on offensive and defensive gradings. Long hours of night work went into these summaries during the season as the factors which went into them became more complicated by scouting reports and movie grades and game data. Shaw's secretaries and coaching staff would fill a filing cabinet with such material, and from it the big man would plan his strategy, shifting players and plays to meet ever-shifting situations.

Right now Shaw was building offensive and defensive units; the "two platoon" system which capitalized each squad member's individual abilities to the utmost, and which, when the stadium filled, would drive radio announcers and fans daffy trying to determine who was who on the field of action. Under that system of specialization more kids would play, kids whose general all-around ability might not have assayed up to the specifications which made a "regular." And under it, the fans would see a faster, more daring game. There would also be less injuries in such a game, less of the grinding fatigue in the waning moments of tight battles which made players more prone to injury.

"Shuttlecock" substitutions had their moments, however. Twice in the State game last year the spotters on the phones had reported fourteen men on the field, and once only ten lined up. Fortunately, the officials had only caught one instance of superfluous manpower. Shaw chuckled to himself as he recalled one moment in that game: A State drive through tackle had gone eight yards for a first down. "I told that Walsh he was over-shifting," Shaw had bellowed. "That guy has been told a million times—" As he finished his tirade, a voice at his side on the bench said: "Gee, that Walsh is dumb, ain't he? He might just as well be setting here." Shaw turned and looked into the grinning face of Walsh!

The big man went on patiently sifting, assembling tentative listings, mentally checking the personalities involved as he did so. It was well past three o'clock when he finished. He heard the first of the squad begin to racket around the locker-room.

Buckets Dugan walked into his office. Behind him came Tod Morgan and Ames. They were already dressed for practice in gray baseball pants, dark blue Central pullover sweat-jackets, heavy white wool socks and football shoes. Each had a mimeographed sheet of paper in his hand, the day's work schedule prepared the following night. They grinned at Shaw. "Makin' any sense?" grunted Dugan, looking over Shaw's shoulder at the scrawlings on his desk.

"Some," said the big man. "Say, I notice you've been down-grading Jeffers. What's the matter with the guy? He's got three minus marks on defense in the past week. Is the kid stale, tired, or what?"

Dugan thought a moment. "He's stubborn. In the first place he's been letting that first blocker get outside him on flank plays instead of moving out with him and letting the line backer plug the hole. Then he's been using the wrong shoulder when he crashes, and instead of forcing the play inside, he's helping turn it where the offense wants to go. He's been told plenty. But he's bull-headed. I'll give it to him again today."

Shaw grunted. It was part of his success as a coach that he took the word of his staff implicitly. Morgan, his first assistant, had coached the club during Shaw's Navy term, and had done an excellent job. He looked at Ames, the back coach. "Can't make up your mind on Dane, can you?"

"The guy's got plenty," said Ames thoughtfully. "I'd like to see him run for us. Perkins has been working with him, you know. But then again he covers a lot of ground on defense too, and he doesn't sucker out of position. I like the way he comes up to tackle, too. He hits, and we might need that more than we need fancy running. I got ball carriers. No, I don't know yet. Where did you put him?"

Shaw glanced down at his notes. "Offense," he said. "Speed. . . . You watched the sprints? He's out there anywhere from three to five yards ahead of the bunch. But we'll leave it open." He picked up his notes and handed them to Morgan. "Want to check before we have them listed? And anything you see that doesn't look right, yell. Incidentally, Ted, how's Piskoti's leg coming?"

"Pulled muscle," answered Morgan, "but nothing serious. Heat treatments and tape. He runs all right."

"Well, take 'em," said Shaw winding up the session. "I'll be out but I'm leaving early. Dane is excused from practice. Had a silly fall on his rooming-house steps that opened his head a bit. Doc says minor concussion. He'll work out at the end of the week, though."

Chapter Eight

CENTRAL'S GYM HOUSE, THE SITE OF THE university's basketball and hockey games and swimming meets, was a huge square building set on the east side of the campus. Ivy climbed its stone walls and made a home for innumerable small birds which town moppets, shouting in the summer dusk, flushed into twittering confusion with pebbles. The place needed paint, thought Shaw, passing through its entrance into the echoing emptiness of the steel-girdered basketball court. The seats surrounding the court, which could accommodate some five thousand round-ball fans, were worn smooth. One of these fine days they'd need a new building, and that would be another headache for the big man to cope with as the athletic director. Football revenue, source of the main support, for most of the minor sports, was on the ebb. They'd be lucky to play to four hundred thousand people this season. Radio income would hold as long as Shaw could hold the appeal of Central teams entrenched in the public mind. The last lease with the oil companies was worth one hundred thousand dollars to the university.

Shaw pondered a trend. Radio broadcasting had begun it, and now with television moving into the picture, and with the major chains sewing up the nation's leading universities, there might conceivably be a day when Central would play to only a handful of spectators in the big stadium; millions more would watch the game at home, getting it free through the courtesy of some national advertiser. Then what would be the difference between college football and a variety act? Who would separate the commercial value of a fine running back and a crooner? The game would belong to the advertisers. The big man smiled ruefully. He had a vision of some huckster offering a package deal which included three big games as a unit. There would be money in it for the board of regents and the university board, big money . . . but the game would go, and its traditions would die. The kids, however, could be pros frankly and openly. Education itself would be an honest extra instead of a pseudo-prime purpose. He shuddered. What would stop some of the top commercial agencies in the talent field from representing a likely tackle?

He could hear a sample sales-talk. "H'yare, Coach, one backfield unit, guaranteed eligible and all A-grade students, for only $2500 a game . . . that includes a right- and a left-handed passer, and two guys good for five yards per average carry." He grinned as he let his fancy run.

DANE was talking to Pipes Johnson in the basketball locker-room. Dane was flat on his back in his underwear on a flat leather-padded cot, with an old side-line blanket draped over him. Pipes, for years the custodian of the university boiler-room and the allied plumbing which gave him his name, was a grizzled man with a back long bent from shoveling. There was no one else in the quiet room as Shaw entered.

"Step on it, Dipper," grinned Shaw. "How are you, Pipes?"

"Fine, Mr. Shaw," grunted Johnson. "Just keepin' one of your boys amused. How's the team?"

Dane slid off the cot with an easy motion, walked across the room to a locker and began to dress. He looked a little less pale, thought the big man. "The team? Oh, fine, Pipes. We'll win one or two, I guess. What are you doing away from your boilers?"

"I can get twenty points if I take Clinton," said Pipes succinctly.

"Sucker bet," grunted Shaw. "Iron City boys again?"

"Same bunch," agreed Pipes sagely. "Anything from two-bit pool cards up—and all the local gossip they can get."

"Ready when you are," interrupted Dane, yanking on a sports coat. "If I need a tie, I'd better stop by the house."

"Lend you one of mine," said Shaw absently. "Let's go—my kids will be hungry."

Bakerston was quiet as Shaw drove the car from the driveway in front of the gym house. It was quiet with that small-town autumn hush comprised of blue evening mists and the faint tang of burning leaves. Lights in the house windows winked cheerfully as they passed Fraternity Row. On the western horizon the dark rolling hills were capped with a faint green-violet afterglow. The air held a fresh upland nip that in the months to come would sharpen to an icy bite. They rode in silence.

Dane was tired. Old Dan's hands had left him limp, and his nap had culminated in a restless semi-sleep which he had only been too glad to have Pipes interrupt. There was still the shadow of a small ache in his head. He wasn't a bit hungry, yet he was aware of a vague hollowness. It was good of Shaw to invite him out to dinner.

The big man's house was friendly, Dane decided, as Shaw wrenched into his driveway. It seemed odd to realize that it had been less than a month since he had first seen it or the Central campus.

"It's been a long time, Professor," she smiled. "How goes it with old Venice?"

"Oh, oh," said the big man as he idled the car toward the back of the house and the left-hand door of his double garage. There was another car parked in the driveway to the right, a coupé that seemed half familiar to Eddie Dane. "We've got company," continued Shaw. "That's Sally Whittaker's car, or did you know?"

Dane gazed steadily at the big man, felt a smile tug at the corners of his lips. He grinned, and there was an answering chuckle from the coach. "What the hell," he said. "My dear wife Molly must have run into her. She was over in Iron City shopping today. But then Sally's been running in and out of here for a coon's age. She's nuts about my kids, and she and Molly are pretty good friends. Come on, Dipper," he added wryly. "I'll give you a lesson in staying away from Miss Whittaker."

Molly Shaw met them at the door. She kissed the big man soundly with frank pleasure. She shook hands with Dane with a pleased, open gesture. "Good to have you with us, Dipper," she said. "John tells me you had an accident." She looked at him brightly. "I hope you're feeling better. Frankly, it makes you look pale and interesting."

Dane warmed to the friendly charm of this tall, slim, comfortable woman. She owned an easy grace, a beauty that was not a matter of physical features, but a reflection of character. "It's awfully nice of you to feed me, Mrs. Shaw," he said. "I hope it isn't too much trouble for you. Coach says you've been shopping. That must cut a day up enough without adding dinner guests."

She grinned. "You are a thoughtful lad, Dipper," she said. "You'll make some girl a docile husband some day. Not like mine. He glowers."

"Who else is eating with us, Molly?" quizzed the big man gravely.

"Well, let's go see, shall we? Or do you two want to stand here in the hallway all night?" She swept ahead of them, talking as she went. "I'm going to let you in on a big secret, Dipper. Coaches are not people, you know. They can't do things like other humans. For instance, John Shaw doubtless annoys all of you boys with training rules, and to do that successfully he has to set an ex-

ample of conduct. No smoking or drinking. But when John Shaw gets home, I sometimes allow him a big hooker of bourbon, which he seems to enjoy, just as the wife of this builder of youth enjoys a Martini. We're going to have a drink, Dipper, and I have a nice cold glass of grapefruit juice for you."

Dane grinned understandingly. "When they were bending me into uniform a few years ago," he said, "I'd have screamed for some gin to go with that juice, Mrs. Shaw. But I get your point."

SALLY WHITTAKER was on the davenport, half concealed by the two Shaw youngsters, seven-year-old Terry and eight-year-old John. "I can't get up, John," she said, trying to pull her skirt down without moving young Terry. "This is the story hour, and I'm busy with a masterwork about a bear that hates honey. Hello, Dipper." Her face was flushed.

"Finish it, finish it," yelled Terry. "You hurried too much, anyhow."

"Well," continued Sally, "there he was, right in the barrel of the stuff, and the only way he could keep from drowning was to eat fast as he could. So he ate honey. He ate honey until the bottom of the big barrel felt solid under his feet. By that time he decided that it tasted fine. He was beginning to like it—so he finished the rest of the barrel. Then, feeling so round and full he leaned against the side of the old thing and tilted it over."

"Then he grunted," cried John. "He made big grunts. Make some grunts, Sally."

Dane could feel his grin reach from ear to ear, saw the same sort of smile crack the lines on John Shaw's face. Sally grunted. "Louder," insisted Terry. "Make a big grunt." She complied, the flush in her cheeks growing redder. "Then the old bear waddled away in the woods to take a big nap. He never hated honey again. In fact, he spends most of his time following bees. . . . Now, you kids beat it. Go hug your daddy."

"Tell me a story, Sally," said John Shaw gently, reaching an arm for the children. "They ready to go up?" he asked his wife. "You guys fed?"

"Take 'em away," said Molly. "'By, boys." She busied herself with glasses on a tray as the big man, boy-laden, headed out of the room. "Hurry back, John."

Dane eased himself into a chair. "Good to see you, Sally," he said. "Meant to call you and say thanks for the publicity the other night."

"Only he never got around to it," flung Molly Shaw over her shoulder. "He took a nosedive on his own doorstep and cracked his head."

Dane could feel Sally's frank stare, and it made him uneasy for a moment. "It was a silly thing to do," he muttered self-consciously. He wished Shaw would come back. Sally's direct glance was suspicious, and he was tired. He couldn't read the worry in her gaze, but Molly Shaw, turning with the glasses, caught it and gave it a surprised, womanly interpretation.

"Here's your fruit juice, Dipper," she said. "And you are joining me in gin, Sally. I hope it's not too vermouthy. I am a poor bartender." She sat on the davenport beside Sally. "Here's to a winning season," she said, "and I hope I sound exactly like a coach's wife." She chatted freely. "You know, Dipper, when I first knew Sally, we were in the midst of a terrible streak. John had dropped five in a row that year, and I was beginning to realize the heartache of this business. Otherwise sane people, many of them complete strangers, would stop me on the street and snarl about the team. They'd call the house at night without any regard for common decency and bawl John out and insult me."

She took a reflective sip of her drink. "The alumni publication was yelling for John's scalp, and even the tradespeople in the stores were surly. I just never thought that football could be so vicious. Why, you would have thought John deliberately set out to lose his games. . . . It was awful. The student body would boo and hiss on the field. I got so that I stayed home and listened to the radio.

"That's when our Sally came riding to the rescue with her newspaper. She wrote some rather fine pieces about the importance of good manners that were a big help. Then John went in the service, and Morgan inherited the squad. I grew very fond of Miss Whittaker."

"Stop it, Molly," said Sally. "Are you going to play Saturday, Eddie?"

"Doubt it," answered Dane. "Can't work out until almost game time, and you don't help a club much if you can't practice. Beside, only J. Shaw can answer questions like that. You covering the game?"

"Every Central home game and most of those away," said Molly Shaw. "She's a fixture."

"And I'm hungry," boomed Shaw from the doorway. "Where's my drink, Molly? Home and children! You ought to try them sometime, Dipper."

"I intend to," said Eddie quietly.

Sally Whittaker's hand plucked idly at the fringe on the davenport cushion. She was thinking that his gray eyes looked darker in the pallor of his face, that he hadn't once met her glance directly, that he seemed ill at ease with her. She decided to ask Molly for a form of advice that she had never before thought necessary.

Chapter Nine

"TIME TO BREAK IT UP," SAID SHAW. "It's nine-thirty." He riffled the cards easily and tossed them across the table. "Dipper has to go to bed, and you've still got a drive to Iron City ahead of you, Sally." He grinned at his wife. "Early to bed wins ball games sometimes, and you wouldn't want me to be a losing coach. They don't have any friends. Reminds me of a story a friend of mine tells around the fried-chicken circuit in the winter. He'd dropped an important game once to Pitt. After he had his squad salted away, he went downtown to make a phone call. When he got into the booth, he reached his hand into a pocket for some coins and found it empty. He reached around for his wallet, and it wasn't there. Anyhow, he was stuck so he walked out of the booth up to the counter in this drugstore and tapped a customer on the shoulder. 'Say,' he said, 'I'm Jay Lawson, State's coach, and I lost my wallet, I guess. Could I borrow a nickel from you to call a friend?' Well, the guy looked at him, a very stony look. He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a dime. 'Here, Lawson,' he said, 'call all your friends.' "

"I'll drive you downtown, Eddie," said Sally.

"Swell," said Dane, avoiding Shaw's quizzical glance. "I can't say thanks enough, Mrs. Shaw. It's been fun."

"For us too, Dipper," smiled Molly warmly. "Let's keep it that way. Your coat's in the hall closet, Sally."

Molly and Shaw watched from the doorway as Sally and Dane drove off. The big man stood with his arm around his wife until the taillight of Sally's car winked away down the quiet street. "There goes an incipient romance," murmured Molly, lifting her head to watch the man's face, "and it's all so new for Sally."

"I hope not," said the big man softly.

"You've never told me too much about young Dane, John. Just the casual things, but I've known since the first night he was here that he's something more than another football player. He has a barely noticeable authority, a sort of young-official look. How did he get his head hurt, John?"

Shaw closed the door gently. He gazed steadily at his wife.

"He was blackjacked, Molly; and you're right. Dane came to Central to do a job. He's working at it. That's all I can tell you. But he's also a fine addition to my squad. He's going to be a very good one for us if everything works out all right. Let's go to bed, or is it too early for you?"

She slipped her hand under his arm. "No," she said, "it isn't." She smiled. "Don't worry, John." She knew him so well, she thought, his patience and consideration, the depth of his feeling for her, the children. "I doubt if I could steer Sally off, right now, though."

DANE was silent during the ride across town. His headache was still with him, and he felt sleepy. Consequently he sat bolt upright and gazed intently through the windshield to give an impression of alertness. Sally too was silent, and an air of constraint filled the car, one that contrasted sharply with the easy familiarity of the first ride they had taken together. The street was deserted as they pulled up in front of Dane's rooming-house.

He sat a moment. "Well," he said. "Thanks for the ride, Sally. It was nice being with you again." He felt the stiffness of the words, felt a foolish inadequacy. He didn't want to be awkward with this girl. He wanted to tell her so, knew intuitively that he could never phrase the words.

"How *did* you hurt your head, Eddie?" she asked softly, her face a pale oval in the small light from the dashboard, an oval framed in the silken darkness of her hair. There was a drawn line at the corner of her lips which gave them a curiously determined set.

"Molly told you," he answered. "I missed the steps the other night. I was in a hurry. It was dark, and I guess I hadn't remembered them as well as I thought I had. So I cracked up."

"You'd have had to fall over backward to bang the back of your head. If you tripped, you'd have gone forward." There was a sense of worried concern in her voice. He responded to it, leaning toward her as if to justify himself with a sudden spate of argument.

"I fell. Let's let it go at that, will you, Sally? I'll be okay by the end of the week, probably play a bit in the Clinton thing if we rack a few up first."

She was quiet again, resignedly so, and her hands rested palm up, limply, with an oddly childlike position.

"I'd feel bad, knowing for sure that you lied to me, Eddie," she said. "I don't really know why it seems so important to me. I just know that it does, that you are the one person I couldn't stand telling me a deliberate lie." There was the suggestion of a tremor in her voice. She had committed herself with the words. She knew it with a definite pang of worry, and a growing sense of something akin to fear. She knew certainly and surely that what this man did mattered to her now and perhaps forever. This, she thought, was what girls are warned about, but what they never truly understand until it happens. She looked at him.

Dane stretched an arm across the seat and pulled her close in a movement that was as natural and right as the meeting of their lips. Her lips were cool and sweet and soft; then suddenly they were warm and tremblingly eager. There was a deep sense of peace within the car.

The automobile stood at the curb a long time, and the faint, uneven snapping sounds of a warm radiator cooling finally died away. When the motor finally violated the silence, and Eddie Dane watched the car move away, he still had not told Sally how he had obtained a bump on the head, nor what he was doing at Central. That she would finally have to know he had no doubt, but there was time ahead—a long time, he hoped, for both of them. . . .

Dane went up the steps to his room lightly, put a tentative hand on the knob and twisted it until the catch released. With a quick, forceful shove he slammed the door back as far as it would go, and it crashed into the wall with a thud that would have jarred the breath out of any person behind it. As he shoved the door, he moved into the room, slid sidewise along the wall and snapped on the light. Then he poised on the balls of his feet and surveyed the room. It was empty, and he felt foolish. The door to his bathroom was ajar, however, and he moved across the room, still cautiously hugging the wall. He drove it open with his foot, stopped dead and dropped to the floor with a twisting motion. There was a figure sitting on the edge of the tub, a relaxed shape wearing a smile which the light from the room outlined. It was the ubiquitous Connor. "That's the way you should have come in the other night."

"Now what," grunted Dane, picking himself up and walking over to the bed, where he flopped back the counterpane.

"We got a nice lead from Washington this afternoon," said Connor crisply, "and since I don't want to associate with you during the day any more than I have to, I thought we could discuss it tonight. Who was in the car? The Whittaker girl? Don't answer. I saw the silhouettes."

"Yes," answered the Dipper. He moved to the windows and pulled down the shades. "Come on, what cooks?"

"I don't know how silly you can get in this business, but an official House Committee turned up another reformed Commie. This one happened to be a talker with some honest-to-God names for a change, and more important, what appears to be concrete evidence."

Dane listened intently, well aware of the serious undercurrent in Connor's tired flippancy.

"The Department threw a subpœna against the Committee to stop that lens-happy chairman from releasing his data to the press, and got a transfer of the transcript." He paused to light a cigarette, walked across the room and sat down in a straight-back chair. "It seems that the convert had documentary data recorded on microfilm which he had neglected to pass along to his erstwhile bosses. And this is something strictly from Disney or *Beverly of Graustark:* he had this dope hidden in an old zither on his farm." He watched Dane's eyebrows raise. "I know," he said, "if you read it in a book, you'd laugh yourself silly. But there it is. Two of the boys went out to the cache and picked up the zither. The contents were impounded."

"Don't tell me you got a local address," said Dane, disbelief patent on his face.

"WE'VE got a dossier," snapped Connor, "and according to the cellular structure of their organization, the guy on this end can't possibly know what we've got until we release it or make the official pick-up. But there's a hitch."

"A big one?"

"It's a pressure job if we want enough to make any charge really hold up. But if this guy is the head man, and our gimmick comes off, we can drive the organization in this whole area so far underground that it will take an atom-powered mole to find it again."

"You've thought about it?"

"See what you think. You may get the rough end, because you're already out in the open. We'll also need some important coöperation from Shaw. What we're going to try for is either a confession or an overt act that could damn' well be construed as one. Washington says work it out our way, and they'll play ball on timing from that end. Before we talk to John Shaw, though, let's see if we can find holes in the setup. It goes like this. . . ."

They talked quietly for an hour. Long after Connor had left, Dane tossed restlessly in the bed, too tired to

sleep; and when slumber finally came, it had a death-like, immobile quality that lasted until the morning sun rode high in the peaceful blue sky over Bakerston.

Chapter Ten

THREE OUT OF EVERY FIVE PERSONS IN Bakerston went to every home game during the season. This total, joined with the entire student body, formed only a dark dapple against the white concrete of the stadium. Iron City, plus maniacs from surrounding compass points, filled the other fifty thousand seats. The process jammed the twenty miles of highway between the metropolis and the campus suburb from eleven o'clock to kickoff time with traffic every Saturday. It brought forth a battalion of State Police on motorcycles to keep the moving metal cavalcade from stacking itself in jangling knots.

The process also brought forth a corps of marginal labor, including students, to man the twenty acres of parking area, a chore dispatched with all the crashing fervor and tidiness of potential junkyard barons. It stimulated the hiring of approximately three hundred special police and ticket handlers, the former to handle the arguments begun by the latter, and the twain to cope with the ultimate results.

To Sally Whittaker, filing her lead for the early *Independent* edition, the Clinton opener crowd looked much the same as usual.

The south end-zone seats, customary indicator of crowd size, were sparsely filled; and from long experience she banged out an attendance estimate of some forty thousand for the game. The west stands, topped by the glassed-in press box, divided also for radio and television, and a movie booth from which the public-address announcer also worked, were jammed in a colorful blaze of hothouse chrysanthemums and shirtsleeves. The east stands, less populated, held the perennial optimists of Clinton Tech, an earnest opponent which had taken Central once every decade with regularity, and this was an off year.

The fact was not apparent in the Central locker-rooms beneath the stadium. "Nobody ever has to get 'em up for an opening game," said Shaw to Tod Morgan as they watched the squad dress. The squad was wearing black today, two-way lastex pants which fitted like skin, with a thin orange stripe down the sides of the legs, black jerseys with orange shoulder tabs, and black stockings. Black gives a squad the illusion of smallness, a good impression to hand enemy scouts in the stands on opening day.

The squad could have dressed in glistening white sateen pants, white jerseys with a broad orange stripe across the chest. It could have taken the field in orange, solid pants and jerseys with bold block numerals. It could have romped in any combination of the three dress uniforms. Shaw liked his kids smartly clad. It kept them smarter in action. Before every game he insisted that a battery of student managers shine every pair of game shoes.

Dane, his ankles taped shin-high, and so tightly that he stood on the balls of his feet, buttoned his jersey beneath his crotch, fitted his hip pads a bit more snug with a practiced wriggle, and stepped gingerly into his pants. The starting line-ups for both offense and defense were posted, and he was riding the bench. Nevertheless he felt a hollow tension pounding at the pit of his stomach, and his hands were sweaty. Not until the ball was in the air would he feel right.

An attendant stationed at the door approached Morgan, and the coach yelled: "All right, you guys, you've got five more minutes before warmup. Get moving."

Then Shaw was talking, his voice a steady, unexcited monotone. "All right, you guys, you know what to expect. We've been over all we know about this squad. The rest is up to you. You defensive men know you have two major threats to watch. Their kid Lampell is one. Remember he runs well, and that he's murder with a pass from those end sweeps we diagrammed. The other is their boy Rogers. He's very bad up the middle with those trap-play line bucks. Perkins has his instructions on offense, and don't give him any guff in the huddle. We're staying in our simplest sequence, unless we need more than I figure right now. Okay, move out and loosen up."

The squad moved slowly out the door to the field tunnel, trotted in a line file to the field as the stands rocketed into a burst of sound. The turf felt soft, springy, thought Dane, loping to the end of the field to receive a few punts. He tried a few wabbling duck-walks to loosen his thighs, kicked his knees high in a stationary run and turned. The squad was divided into passing and kicking units, each man pulling muscles into full stretches.

Back in the locker-room Shaw and his staff were still busy. The big man gave his telephone spotters instructions, placing his freshman coach and an assistant in the covered booth adjoining the press-box, putting his line coach in the rim-box atop the south-end zone stands. Ames would work the receiving end at the field bench, and Morgan would handle the substitutions, leaving Shaw to master-mind. Two sets of spotters were enough for this game.

The muffled clamor which penetrated into the sub-stadium area told the big man that Clinton was on the field. He looked at his watch. "Okay," he said, "get 'em in and let 'em take a breather." He nodded to Morgan. "I don't want to talk to them again. We'll hold both units until we see who wins the toss."

SALLY, high in the press-box, saw Dane trot off the field with the rest of the squad. She felt absurdly proud of the easy, almost jointless manner in which he moved, thought that he looked slimmer, almost fragile compared to the crimson-clad Clinton players. He looked smaller than his own teammates. She worried about him. She concentrated on the field. This would be another game she wouldn't see. Working alone, she would have to cover the play-by-play, handle her own diagram of ball-movement, and when it was all wrapped up, file her overall. Nobody "sees" a ball game that way. She glanced down the press box, waved a hello to the A.P., nodded to the U.P., apparently a new man this season.

Her Western Union man, Euclid Dotie, who looked four years older than Adam himself with each passing season, was messing with a small screwdriver at his key. She hoped that Euclid would not inadvertently encounter any press-box transients with an old memory and a bottle. The coop was not crowded today. For later games, which Sally would work with Timmy Watts and other staff members, the press-box would be jammed. Shaw's teams packed an appeal of national character. This one, deep and balanced, would furnish plenty copy as the season wore on.

The stands rose for the kickoff. Central won the toss, and the referee signaled their choice to receive. Shaw had started his defensive line with his offensive backfield, crossing the onlookers on the first play of the game. Sally figured that the big man might want his defensive line, a bit bigger than his offensive unit, to take that first crashing blocking, perhaps pour it on and send somebody away with the ball. She wrote it.

Dane, standing with the rest of the benched squad at the sideline, watched the ball tumble end over end from the Clinton forty to Central's goal-line, where Perkins gathered it in and started back up the funnel. As he

passed the fifteen, he sidestepped a Clinton tackler, cut toward the sideline and slid the ball to Floyd, the starting fullback. Floyd, making the reverse good, swept back with the ball tucked out on his hip, and fled through good blocking past the Clinton thirty-yard line before a desperation dive tripped him.

Central was knocking at the door. Two plays later Perkins had them into the end zone. He sent Tripelda booming over guard on a simple trap play for twelve and a first down, dropped back, faked a pass into the flat to the man in motion, and tossed to end Daniels, who took the ball all by himself for the score. Perkins booted the extra point. The quickie broke Clinton's back, except for one crimson surge near the end of the half which netted Tech a score. By that time Central was riding a three-touchdown lead, and the halftime figures read 21 to 6. Even under wraps the club had a gloss apparent to everyone in the press-box.

Central scored twice more during the third quarter, and just as the period changed, Morgan sent Dane into the game. They held the ball on their own forty, and Perkins welcomed Dane in the huddle. "Get your feet wet, Dipper. Let's have Forty-M on three. Move out on that halfback Reichen." Reichen, a guard, grunted. "Tell me my business," he said. They set the play. As the ball smacked into Perkins' canny hands, Dane, the man in motion, broke for the sideline. Behind him Perkins faked the ball deftly to Schwartz, who lashed into the line. The rangy quarterback then stood and fired a pitch-out to Dane.

Dane's speed brought the crowd to its feet with a gasping roar. He flashed past the line backer almost before Reichen, pulling out of the line, had applied his block. He was a black blur along the sideline, and then he was into the end zone. The stands roared.

Ainsley Ames, working the receiving end of the phones at the bench, grinned from ear to ear. He put the phone down and walked over to Shaw at the end of the bench. "In case you're interested, they happened to put a watch on that play. Dane was exactly six and four-fifths seconds from scrimmage line to end zone."

"What did he go. Fifty-five, sixty?"

"Sixty."

"Okay, now get him out of there. I think one play's enough for him today."

Trotting out, Dane passed Rodrigues on the way in. The swarthy replacement grimaced, and his face under his headgear looked like a frost-struck persimmon. "Hello, hero," he said. "You kill me. I'm supposed to be the runner on this club." He batted Dane on the arm in passing. "It was sweet, Dipper."

There was no further scoring. Shaw sent in his defensive unit for the remainder of the period. He then cleaned the bench in a series of shuttling substitutions of all the rest of the squad that had not yet seen action. It was still 42 to 7 when the final gun banged.

It was strange how a game welded a squad together. Practice and workouts, scrimmages and skull sessions, locker-room horsing and bull-talk groups—put them all together, and the best you had was cliques and grooved play patterns. But one game, win or lose, changed all that, totaled personalities into a homogeneity that only the season's end could break.

The condition showed in many, almost obscure, ways. Dane, seldom effusive, tweaked Piskoti on the butt as he passed the locker bench to the showers. "How'd the leg hold up?" he asked as Piskoti yipped. "Good, good. Never felt it," grinned the man. "Hey, you caught yourself a romp, didn't you? I saw the windup from under a heap. Bastard was sitting on my head, so I didn't get a right good look. Where the hell's that Reichen? He was belchin' when he pulled out on that play. Struck me funny, an' I was laughin' when I started my charge."

"How would he know what he's doing? The guy's in love."

Perkins wandered over, rubbing his chin. "Hey, you guys, how 'bout a movie tonight, and dinner in Iron City? I'll even shave if somebody springs a new blade."

There was a time when college football squads could be closely held, roomed together, fed at a training-table and frequently watched. That sort of handling was part of the past. Today's teams, with married men, prematurely aged veterans and somehow wiser kids, couldn't be treated with yesterday's rules. Training was on trust. Housing, with crowded campuses, prohibited central living-quarters. Discipline was a matter of simple economics for the scholarship men. At Central it was also a thing of respect for Shaw, and a matter of individual pride in that collective entity, the Central team itself. Shaw's clubs were proud clubs.

"Can't make it, Randy," grunted Piskoti. "Promised Berg I'd eat his wife's cookin' and then play some cards."

"Tough," grinned Perkins. "Wienstock and Thomas are goin', and we thought we'd make a party. How you fixed, Dipper? We'll be back by eleven, and we can all sleep tomorrow morning."

A student manager shouldered into the group. He was a small kid with a towel slung over his shoulder, somebody's helmet slung on his arm, and a bubbling, excited victory grin all over his face. "Got a note from the press-box for Dane," he said, passing him an envelope. The missive was from Sally. *"I hate to hint,"* he read, *"but I'll be out of here in another half-hour and I'll be hungry. Want to wait? Pick you up at the SD gate. Sally."*

Dane poked Perkins with a finger. "Randy, how would you like to give me a raincheck? I think I've got a small date."

"The trouble with you guys," said Perkins gravely, "is that you are snobs. The hell with you, Piskoti! I hope you lose your shirt to old Buglebeak. And as for you, Dane, I hope you don't lose anything at all."

Chapter Eleven

THE MAN HAD STAYED IN THE STADIUM UNTIL the pushing, jostling crowd had gone, unwilling to experience the prodding intimacies of herded strangers. Now he walked through the gathering dusk along familiar streets into the town. He was a spare man with an ascetic's face and a scholar's brow, and he walked with a minor limp and an unconscious arrogance. He had seen a football game, the first in several years, and he had seen an adversary in one thrilling burst of speed along a sideline. He supposed there was something symbolic in that expenditure of energy to play a game; he thought wryly that energy for games was characteristic of a people bred to aimless conflict and daily competitions for what appeared to be equally aimless living. But crude energy alone, he reflected, could be directed, indeed, should be, or nowhere at all would humanity advance.

Humanity was not to be confused with people, with individuals grubbing out an existence, raising families, and in general not knowing what was best for them. People could not matter, a lesson which demanded long discipline before it was fully comprehended. Only humanity counted; and if there was a cosmic irony in such an ideal, he was now beyond the point of understanding it. Humanity, of course, transcended international borders; and this, in a day when fretful sovereignties observed the fact yet clung to the cherished fictions of nationalism, race and creed, was the nub of what, he thought, lesser folk considered treason.

Treason does not begin with an overt act against one's country. Treason is a cumulative affair born of a man's attitude toward himself and his evaluation of his own importance. When that evaluation of a personal belief becomes more important than a comparative evaluation of the well-being of a national society, then treason, with or without a physical or legal transgression, exists. Yet, in a democratic society there can be no physical punishment for a thought or a belief. In this tenet lay a subtlety which, so far, had prevented democratic countries from dealing sanely with such matters as espionage, loyalties and the so-called preservation of individual liberties. In this axiom of Americanism lay his personal security, his sense of safety. Yet one could never grow careless. That was punishable by persons who understood the ideals for which they stood, and saw nothing beyond reconciliation in the use of blood, brutality and character assassination to support those ideals.

The Rogalski instance was an example, the first that he personally had ever ordered; and while the demonstration gave him stature in the group, it had awakened a thing he had believed long dead, a glimmer of conscience, and with the awakening, a fear. He regretted the necessity for such steps; yet he could see no flaw in his reasoning. Rogalski's brother, an ardent and active man, had failed. Peters, as he had been known in party circles, had in some manner, probably the foolish affection he had persisted in demonstrating for his younger brother, been traced to Bakerston and Iron City. He had been warned of that almost simultaneously with Rogalski's arrest. The word had come through channels.

There was no certainty in knowing what Rogalski the elder might have told young Rogalski, nor what stresses the young man might have endured, what even unconsciously he might have revealed. The chances were that he knew nothing other than that his brother had been secretive about his personal life, although the boy had been subject to early indoctrination. That was enough to establish a connection with the campus. It was necessary that the trail end, necessary to gamble that it might end. He had acted. That he had failed, he had no doubts. Dane's presence, as a person interested in young Rogalski, was proof enough.

Now he would lie dormant, protected in respectability, cut off from the industrial organization in Iron City which knew only that he existed and little else. He would quietly enjoy his power until further orders reached him.

Still, he had never experienced the pressures other men imbued with his ideals had been subjected to. Things had come easy to him, so easily that he had early established his own superiority over most of the people he had met. He was born into a good middle-class Philadelphia family, had gone to private schools and Maine camps until he had entered Harvard, where he graduated possessed of a Phi Beta Kappa key and a quiet charm that attracted others. He had majored in medieval history, studied, mostly on easily-won scholarships, at the University of Madrid, the Sorbonne and at Cologne.

It was at Cologne, he thought, his mind ticking off its precise and measured rhythms as he walked through the town, that the stimulating thinking of a fierce evangelism had first fired him, the thinking of a Europe still emerging from the patterns broken in war. He had returned to Philadelphia in 1933 to find apple-peddlers on Market Street, and his father a suicide, broken economically and spiritually, and buried in a quiet if unkempt Quaker cemetery. He had felt only a sense of estrangement for his mother, a wisp of a woman, confused, bitter, and outraged that a shifting economy should destroy her pleasant routines. He hardly knew the button-breasted, slattish spinster who was his sister, a woman with an aggressive religious streak, working for an obscure magazine.

Their home, a faded brick-frame combination in a quiet suburb, was secure. Others were being dispossessed daily. And while there was no market at all for his scholarship in the area, there was a thrilling hope in the national stirring, a cataclysmic changing of values in a social movement known as the New Deal.

Democrats, always at a premium in Philadelphia, had been glad to welcome a new worker, one with his obvious academic background and mannerly charm. He worked effectively. He was one of the first of the deserving into Washington, a contact and survey man for Henry Wallace's AAA in the Department of Agriculture, at that time a catch-all for the bright young men who were not yet grooved. There was a new nation abuilding under matchless leadership, but it was not precisely a time of balance, of measured, judicious thought-taking, a fact ignored in all but the most rock-ribbed centers of Tory thinking.

HE made friends easily, drank moderately, preferred select company, which by that curious osmosis of New Deal Washington in the first administration included the new great; and he rose in Government circles, was frequently on loan from agency to agency when discreet, intelligent men were required. He was appreciated, active, strong in a feeling of genuine usefulness for the first time in his life. It was perfectly natural for him to be asked to visit with those he later knew as party members, to share their discussions, to be aware of the flattery in their demand for his expressed opinions. It seemed natural, even intellectually necessary, for him to join the party. It was a motivating force and an inexhaustible source of energy should the then current drive toward a better world ebb into shoddier politics and small jealousies. . . .

He entered the house on the winding Bakerston sidestreet where he maintained his meticulously arranged

three-room apartment, thought idly that he would dress at leisure, take his carefully kept 1940 Chevrolet from the garage and drive to Iron City for dinner, perhaps at the Steel Hotel. He would buy the early editions of the local Sunday papers and return early for a quiet evening. For a moment he regretted declining a fellow faculty member's invitation to bridge, decided that, for some vague reason, he would not have been good company. . . .

The party had asked nothing of him for quite a long period, other than seeking his help in inviting other selected guests to occasional social gatherings. In 1938 he had been loaned to the State Department, attached to the division handling Latin-American affairs, where he had worked unobtrusively and not particularly well. He was surprised when the inter-agency loan had been made permanent. He had shared the proper sympathy with little Finland during the Russian invasion, shrugged it off and pointed out the major Nazi menace. He performed the curious bit of mental gymnastics involved in the Stalin-Hitler pact of 1939.

It was late in the same year that he had been asked by a party friend for a look at some papers marked *Confidential*, but hardly top secret. He had refused. The party was political, he thought; exactly the same as the Democrats or Republicans. That night he had callers who gravely and with deep sincerity explained the need for truly international thinking, the need for an extension of a something better than a nationalistic New Deal throughout the world, the assistance required for practical means to achieve it, and the mechanism by which he had achieved his current trusted and respected position. He had removed the requested papers for an overnight loan, returned them the next day, unsmudged.

The next time a similar request had been made concerning information in a more important category, he had again refused. Integrity dies hard.

Even today, with his understanding of discipline and party necessity more acute, he still felt a hot flush of shame, of stark fear as he recalled that instance. Three strangers had called at his apartment, requested his presence at a familiar place downtown, and had instead driven him down to Monument Park. There, in the reflected glow of a moon on the majesty of Washington Monument, he had been physically beaten with a scientific skill that left him a quivering hulk, with every tortured nerve ajangle. He had not erred again. His position, his vulnerability, was made clear, his idealism clarified, and with it the realization that he was a physical coward.

Not until Hitler's invasion of Russia, and in the bursting Washington fervor inspired by the acquisition of another major ally against Nazism, did he finally adjudicate his thinking, gain a sense of personal comfort, which, incidentally, he had learned did not really matter to the party. At the height of what could have been his greatest period of party usefulness, he had been asked to resign, giving ill health as an excuse. He had left the State Department, was promptly offered another honorable, reasonably publicized post as assistant to the executive director of a newly formed Global Fellowship Association.

He had not known then, did not know now, that there had been a defection of party spirit somewhere in the chain of apparatus which might possibly have involved him in an unflattering manner—might, which was more important, have endangered the basic work. That work went on; for him it wore the blunt label *espionage*. He exchanged it for the honors, prestige and sense of power the service bestowed upon him. In 1943 he had come to Central University, his academic background finally recognized, made useful. There was no freedom in the peace of Bakerston. When he let himself think as he was now, he recognized that he had accepted an alien form of life, and that it gave him the outward appearance of honor. Not for years had he missed his self-respect. If he knew its lack, he termed the void discipline. He was fortunate, he thought, that he had never married, and in the same instant was aware of an acute loneliness, a foreboding.

The feeling stayed with him during the ride to Iron City. He allowed a hotel attendant to remove his car for parking, entered the lobby and passed into the dining-room. As he followed the head waiter between the rows of damask-topped tables, he nodded to several students who took his lectures; as he approached the table selected, a voice broke his stride, and he turned. Sally Whittaker, whom he knew, as practically the whole campus knew, from her newspaper associations with Central, was seated at a table to his left. She smiled and beckoned to him. He hesitated, nodded to the waiter, and crossed to her.

"Good evening, Miss Whittaker," he said courteously.

"It's been a long time, Professor Slanp," she smiled. "How goes it with the Minnesingers, old Venice and the Hanseatic League?"

Her escort was taller standing than he looked from the upper reaches of a stadium, and there was a serene strength in his face. Perhaps there had been no mistake the night his room was examined, and the sap should have struck harder. The Professor allowed himself a quizzical, charming smile.

"This is Mr. Dane," said Sally brightly. "Eddie, this is Professor Stuart Slanp of the University, a valued acquaintance of mine."

"Delighted," said the Professor. "I saw him this afternoon. That was a creditable run you made, young man."

"How do you do," replied Eddie, his face impassive; "and thank you, sir."

"I just wanted to say hello," explained Sally. "I'm sure you'll see Eddie on the campus from time to time."

The spare man inclined his head gravely, nodded to Dane and moved off again. The young man's murmur reached him as he turned.

"It's nice to know you."

Chapter Twelve

"You're quiet tonight," said Sally, leaning her elbows on the table. They waited for a dinner-check while the Rose Room orchestra threaded the air with violin music. "Thinking," said Dane; "and frankly, I'm tired."

"One-play Dane is all fagged out," she grinned.

The waiter was back at their table. "I have the check, sir," he said, "and a note."

Eddie opened it, chuckled and threw it across the table to Sally. He turned in his chair and surveyed the room. *"Sucking in with the press, eh!"* read the note. His eye finally caught a table in a soft-lighted corner, caught also an impudent nose-thumbing salute from Perkins, Wienstock and Thomas. He paid the check, excused himself and wandered over to them. "What's the matter?" he ribbed. "You guys jealous?"

They hooted at him noisily, turning the heads of nearby diners well used to undergraduate tumult in the Rose Room. "Be on that eleven o'clock bus, boy," they chorused.

"What movie are you guys going to see? Tell me now, and I'll go some other place far away from it," grinned Dane.

"You won't get any place with her," informed Thomas gravely. "Was a guy named Dike who worked himself all into a breakdown trying to get cozy with Sally a year or so ago. She gave him the old straight-arm. Strictly from the Brownie troop, that girl. Football players are nice to write about, but that's all. At that, you're lucky dragging her to dinner. Don't crowd it. Ditch her and come on to the show. We're gonna help ourselves to a

dream of Ava Gardner and listen to a flock of machine guns—better deal."

"Look," said Perkins sagely, "you have to try, I guess. We'll wait for you at the bus terminal, and all go back together. Quarter to eleven, okay?"

"Cripes," grunted Dane, "the encouragement I get! Okay, I guess I'll see you." He turned and rejoined Sally. As they walked the length of the dining-room to the doorway, Dane felt a creeping chill down his back, and he shrugged and turned.

The soft light glinted off knives, forks, plates, napery, the hands and faces of engaged diners. Across the room the Professor was watching them leave. His eyes met Dane's for a long moment; then Sally's arm was pulling Dane through the doorway. He was serious again, contained and a bit taut.

OUTSIDE the night was crystal clear; the street-lights winked down the stretch of Bessemer Boulevard until they misted off into the ever-present smog, a bit less thick than usual. Dane glanced down at Sally.

"We walk. We go to a movie. We take a ride in your car. You name it. But I've got to make the eleven bus back. I half promised the guys I'd meet them, and I promised myself some sleep."

"Why don't you promise me something?" snapped Sally with mock irritation.

"What was it you had in mind?"

"Well-l-l-l—" she drawled.

"I promised myself something concerning you a long time ago."

They walked in silence for ten paces. "That sounds as though it might mean a great deal," she said. "It also sounds pretty darn' fresh."

"I'm fed. I'm full. I'm peaceful. It was fresh." He hesitated broadly, like an actor emphasizing a line. "It still is."

"Well, I'm weak and strangely amenable tonight," she said. "Up to a certain point, that is; and I don't feel like riding, walking or going to a movie. Could I entice you into my own house, for, say a riotous game of gin rummy? The family is out; the record-player works, and Gorgeous George is on the television set. I could have brought my passes if I thought you cared."

"Passes I'll take care of," he said lightly, "and you seem to own a happy idea. Let's go."

They walked around the corner, down two blocks to the *Independent* building, where Sally picked up her car. They drove back to the boulevard, swung east and crossed a bridge to Iron City's older residential area, and still its finest, clinging to the sides of a set of knolls which lifted into a ridge overlooking the city. The Whittaker house, a square frame structure lifting to a four-gabled semi-peaked roof, was an odd dun shape against the night as Sally halted the car before it. "Come on," she said. "We're here, and from the lack of lights, either Mother and Daddy are out, or he's one step behind her in the house. She goes around turning them on, and he follows turning them off. It's misguided thrift, too, because he owns stock in the local power company."

Dane chuckled appreciatively as he followed her up the walk. The house was quiet, and a lamp burned in the living-room as they entered it from a central hall. It smelled warm, with a personal fragrance. Sally threw her coat over the back of a chair. "Relax," she said, "while I case the premises. If you were Timmy Watts, I'd offer you a drink of Daddy's forty-year-old bourbon, but then if you were Timmy, you'd sit and swill it with Daddy while you cheated each other at cribbage. Try the television if you want. Channel Six will give us the megrims; Eight will have us blind before fifteen minutes have passed; Two will show us a juggler. Later we'll really enjoy the thing—some years later. Get the card table, too. It's back of that thing that looks like a chintz pontoon beneath the window. Cards are in the drawer of the refectory table."

"You told me to relax," said Eddie, sinking blissfully into the depths of a velour-covered davenport. "Get about your business." He watched her swing from the room.

Where this was going, where it could go, at the present time, he couldn't foresee. Where he wanted it to go, he had only begun to analyze. There had been a dark-eyed, thin-faced girl in Italy during the war. There had been a clean-limbed, wide-eyed, honey-headed girl in Houston whom he had once met on an assignment who might have been it, had time and the job permitted. . . . Beside Sally they paled. The sudden depth of tenderness he felt both abashed and embarrassed him. . . . The grouping of problems all clamoring for simultaneous answer had never bothered him; but always before, even in combat, his problems had held an impersonal quality, an objectivity which demanded solution outside himself. He was no stranger to emotion—in fact, his past errors of consequence had been on the sensitive side; but even in fear, cold rage and tearing pity, he had not sensed a projection of those emotions into the future of Eddie Dane. They were experiences of the moment. Sally was something for a lifetime, and the completion of his present assignment was the last of a long string unless—he refused to face the implications of that thought.

Sally was back in the room, a sure, direct warmth in her manner, her flame hair loose and ribboned at the back of her neck. The simple, pale neutrality of a dress whose decorative effect depended solely upon figure added emphasis to the vitality of her hair and eyes, the color of which seemed deeply violet in the lampglow.

Eddie rose, not realizing that he was staring, but Sally did, and she felt a warming flush rising into her face.

"Hey, what are you doing, wearing out the Iron City Oriental? You don't even have the box blazing, and that makes you the first male ever to escape the gadgeteering urge which goes with that set. Where's the card table?"

He crooked a finger. "Come here, Miss Whittaker. You haven't paid for your dinner."

She came slowly, almost uncertainly, and stood very close before him. He locked his arms behind his back and leaned slightly, kissing her gently with what seemed an exploratory abstraction. "That's for your fruit cup," he said.

"Soup and steak and dessert to go," she murmured, "and they tell me steak comes high."

"Soup," and then his arms were around her, his hands urging her to him. There was a long, breathless moment.

"Steak."

"Let's buy the whole steer and go without dessert." Her voice was low, and it awakened a hunger within him, an intensity which, transmitted into the iron of his arms, welded them into a single entity.

There was a long, sighing shudder in her voice. "Let's risk the card table." For answer he took her hand, led her to the davenport, a dignity, a sureness and a rightness in his action matched only by the grace and certainty of her own as she followed him. "I wonder," she said, "how Gorgeous George is doing?"

"Not me. I wonder how Eddie Dane is doing."

SHE pulled him down beside her and he laid his lips in the hollow of her throat while her hands caressed the back of his neck, her fingers sliding beneath his collar. "I wonder if he knows what he's doing," she said steadily. He lifted his head, gazed at her. "No," he said. "How would he? The guy's in love."

Her lips were warm at his ear, and there was only a shred of the whisper. "I'm afraid that's what's wrong with the dame too."

Suddenly her face was wet. He could taste the salt at her eyes, her cheeks, her lips, lips demanding, giving,

bruising. Not with tears, he thought, and not until. . . . But while he shaped the unformed impulse, he rose, stood shakily, a puzzled grin at his lips. "Sally," he said softly, "where's that card table? A fellow I once knew told me that acey-deucy was a lovely way to learn numbers."

She gazed up at him, steadily, proudly. "Especially to count up to ten," she said. . . .

At Bakerston, John Shaw entertained his staff in the first of many Saturday-night conclaves at which resigned wives would gossip, play bridge and trade talk of children while Shaw and his staff analyzed movies.

Central's game pictures were developed, printed and delivered each week within a few hours after the stadium emptied, thanks to the university's own photo laboratories and the unflagging zeal of hypo-handed Ziggy Elsbach, a reformed newsreel man who was as much a part of Shaw's autumnal organization as his coaches.

Shaw, Morgan, Ames, Hogan, the freshman coaching staff, and the three graduate players who served as scouts were grouped around a big table, each with a pad of paper before him, each concentrating on the screen at the end of the semi-darkened room. Shaw, seated behind the small projector, ran the game straight through once.

"Okay," he said. "That's it. Now we go back and go to work." For the next two hours he ran plays, re-ran them, let the film go, backed it, and slowly, with much comment, the note-pads filled. Before the big man finally stretched to snap on the room lights again, he called Molly and the rest of the coaching wives. They grouped behind his chair. "Watch this," he said. "Fourth quarter, our last score. Perkins takes the ball on a pitch-out to Dane, and watch Dane—" The tiny figure on the diminutive playing-field flashed along the sideline. "Oh, brother," said Ames at Shaw's elbow, "that's for me!"

"How about some coffee, Molly?" said Shaw thoughtfully. "I think we've had it here for the time being. . . ."

The Bakerston bus rolled out of Iron City, its tires buzzing somnolently on the highway. It was almost empty; and Randy Perkins, Thomas and Wienstock sprawled in their seats. The eleven o'clock on Saturday night was always nearly empty, a condition not true of the next three later busses, which were usually filled with students. "You know," said Wienstock, "I got an idea the Dipper missed this bus, for some reason." Perkins grunted. "I envy him the reason."

Chapter Thirteen

THE SQUAD WAS BEGINNING TO SHOW THE lean, hungry look typical of Shaw teams every season. Before the State game, the Saturday following Thanksgiving, the forty-four-man varsity would own a stringy, pantherish appearance, and old Dan, in conspiracy with the coaching staff and the team doctor, would be watching the daily weight charts with a suspicious concern, and pumping vitamin tablets and doses of plain gelatin in water into every football player in sight.

The club was working harder this week, getting set for Warwick University, a rough aggregation from the Mid-South which ran from a deceptive single-wing attack. The team was also getting out on the field later each day as Shaw went patiently over the scouting reports on Warwick and the movies of the opposition's first game.

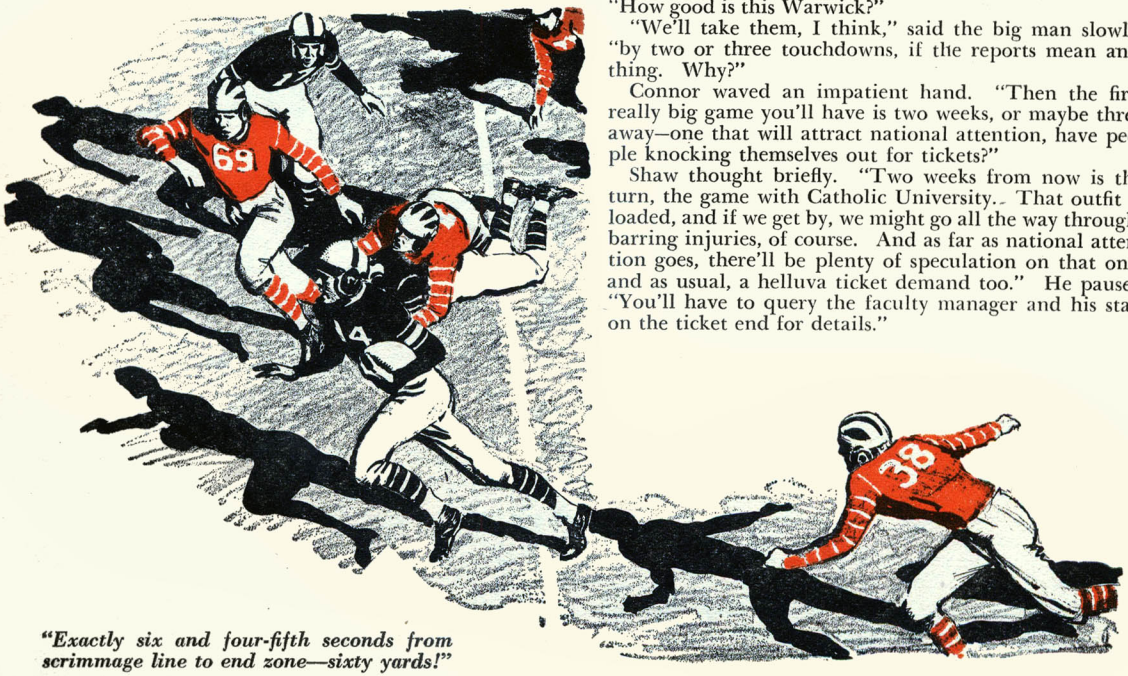
Dane, having made his peace with Perkins, Wienstock and Thomas for missing the bus, was working out with the first offensive backfield unit and taking turns also with the second defense unit. He was working hard, enjoying it, and concentrating upon his assignments until each motion became automatic. So engrossed was he on the Wednesday following the Clinton game that Connor, watching the workout with Shaw, idled around the field until nearly dusk before asking Shaw to call him in. They went into Shaw's office, Dane still in uniform, Shaw preoccupied.

"I'm going to make this fast," said Connor. "Incidentally, Dipper, I got your report on that introduction to our friend Saturday night. It's going to Washington with me tonight. I'll be down there for the rest of the week setting that end up." Connor swung to Shaw. "How good is this Warwick?"

"We'll take them, I think," said the big man slowly, "by two or three touchdowns, if the reports mean anything. Why?"

Connor waved an impatient hand. "Then the first really big game you'll have is two weeks, or maybe three away—one that will attract national attention, have people knocking themselves out for tickets?"

Shaw thought briefly. "Two weeks from now is the turn, the game with Catholic University. That outfit is loaded, and if we get by, we might go all the way through, barring injuries, of course. And as far as national attention goes, there'll be plenty of speculation on that one, and as usual, a helluva ticket demand too." He paused "You'll have to query the faculty manager and his staff on the ticket end for details."



"Exactly six and four-fifth seconds from scrimmage line to end zone—sixty yards!"

Dane sat silently. Connor's plan was familiar to him. It was as good as any, as weak as most, and apt to be as futile as many tried in the past. Yet pressure must be applied, whether they failed or not.

"How about ticket scalping? Will there be much of it?"

"For the Catholic game," said Shaw, "the boys will be busy. But don't get the wrong impression. Colleges are run by experienced men with an appreciative eye on their own till now, and there will be much less than you think."

"Could you and the faculty manager, with the president's full approval, of course, issue a statement that you are all worried about scalping for this game, enough worried, for instance, to ask F.B.I. and Treasury department help in Iron City to make a routine check?"

"On what grounds?" asked Shaw. "And where do you fit? There's nothing illegal in most cases, unless counterfeiting is involved."

Connor grinned. "We know that; but because football is such a big business these days, it is the duty of the Federal Government to make a selected check at a few specific locations a few times each season to make sure that all Federal taxes on tickets are being handled properly. If Central University is worried for the Catholic game, for instance, then certainly the Government could be slightly worried. Enough, at least, to let me fill the area with some obviously aggressive operatives, all of whom will be under the direction of the F.B.I. office in Iron City."

Shaw's glance was direct and hard. "You're ready to make a definite move. This ticket business is nonsense?"

"This ticket business is not nonsense. It will get more of our men into the area openly, and for a reason. But there will be another reason read into the move."

"At the same time your statement breaks, a story will make every national wire service in the country, a story released from Washington and sponsored jointly by the Justice Department and the Congressional committee on un-Americanism. It will concern evidence of actual espionage, and a confession by one of the spies previously engaged in it. The man making that confession and offering specific evidence will be known to a man here at Central University. His personal knowledge, plus additional Federal help ostensibly looking for ticket tax infractions, may add up to the break we need."

Connor's voice was stern. "In addition, Dane, as a journalism student on a class assignment, will call upon that man and ask some pointblank questions. At least, we think we'll do it that way." He paused. "They may be dangerous questions, Dipper. Never forget that."

SHAW rose from his desk, and the swivel complained as he did so. He paced. "Damn it," he said softly and bitterly. "You realize that the University gets a bad name in any event. The ticket business, while normal enough, is bad for the school, bad for the game because it approaches another one of those teapot-tempest scandals that look worse than they are. Whatever you do with the guy involved here, also adds a lousy smudge on the place, weakens the faith of a helluva lot of people in another sound institution—and—" He stopped as the thought struck him. "And maybe it gets Dane shot if this guy goes bad all of a sudden!"

He banged a fist on the desk-top with a controlled gentleness that was more revealing of stress than a crashing impact. "Why can't you pick your man up quietly and without all the fanfare? If you know him, grab him. Why involve people that are not concerned, innocent people? Why blast the thing loose with all the publicity?"

Connor's smile was not pleasant. "*'The school, apart from life, apart from politics, is a lie and a hypocrisy,'*" he quoted. "I assume that Lenin, the man who said that, is still under glass in Red Square. But we have a certain set of specialized problems in this work. In the first place, party membership as such is no crime in the United States. Better brains than mine will have to decide some day whether or not it should be. In the second place, convictions for espionage are very tough to get unless intent can be shown and data cited to aid an enemy and do an injury to the United States. In the period covered by the evidence we have on the man here at Central, the Soviet Union was an ally in a decidedly tough shooting-war—a period of time, incidentally, when some highly secret information was being freely swapped between our own Office of Strategic Services and the Commie NKVD.

"Furthermore, in all espionage prosecutions in peacetime a statute of limitations is enforced. There are also other constitutional protections that any accused individual may enjoy in these cases—namely, the acceptance of his refusal to testify in any matter which might tend to incriminate him or degrade him.

"As if these factors were not enough, there are also the ever-present complications of simple politics, inter-departmental wranglings, and the understandable reluctance of the American people to believe the fairy-tale qualities these cases often hold."

DANE and Shaw sat silent, listening intently.

"The guy we're after might not be held for an old crime, especially when it occurred to benefit a wartime ally. He can't be held for simple party membership. He can't be held on any definite, provable charge that we could make at this time. We know, from the scattered facts we hold, and from the tie-in we traced to this campus, that our man never stopped his espionage service. So what? Our hands are tied unless he makes a break on his own initiative of some kind. He won't make that break without pressure. He might not make it anyhow, no matter what we could do legally."

Connor's voice was an introspective monotone. "Character assassination is not a pretty thing in a democratic country. We didn't come by it naturally, but we are learning that its ugly uses may be reversed in driving otherwise unpunishable people underground, in making their work useless to the alien interests they serve. If we have to, we'll break everything possible around this guy's head. Sure, there'll be a nasty smell—"

"And sometimes," said Shaw cuttingly, "you'll hit an innocent person, ruin his life unjustly."

Connor's face was pale, drawn. It looked more hawk-like than ever. "You think we don't worry about that? It haunts the best of us always." He turned to face Dane. "What kind of a war did you fight, Dipper, when the chips were down in Italy, for instance?"

Dane's reply was measured. His words were carefully spaced. They showed his understanding of Shaw's dilemma, his sympathy for Shaw's principles. They also indicated an inflexibility in his own character. "There was a guy who died on the first break in this case, the break that gave us Rogalski's brother and the original letter. There was a kid, young Rogalski, on this end, and we can't prove that, either. Not in any court of law, with any sort of evidence that might hold up. It's tough working with pillowcases on your hands, when the other guys carry guns and clubs." He smiled thinly at the big man. "It's better than finding it was a guy on the team, isn't it?"

"I don't think I could have taken that," said Shaw simply. "You men set it up. I'll do what I can." He leaned from his perch on the desk and tapped Dane lightly. "Get dressed, kid, and be careful." He turned to Connor. "You'll work this out with the university officials too?"

Connor nodded.

The door opened, and Ames stuck his head in. "They're dressing," he said. "You want to run through a chalk

talk tonight?" His glance at Dane and Connor was quizzical.

"Let Buckets diagram those Warwick split-bucks again, the ones where their tackles change spacing. That'll do it for today. Oh, yes—Armbruster said he wanted to talk over a personal problem with me. Tell him I'll see him in a minute."

Ames left the room, and Dane followed him into the lockers. Connor nodded once to Shaw and left. "I'll stay in touch," he said. "You'll hear from President Bixford on the tickets, and from the faculty manager too."

Toddy Armbruster was a big blond kid with a close-cropped Dutch haircut and kewpie face. He was clad in long white stockings, a jock-strap and nothing else as he entered Shaw's office, but he carried a dirty towel with which he daubed at his round, sweating face.

"You look cute," said Shaw. "Ever occur to you that you might pick up a cold and ride the bench for a few games?"

"Well, I wanted to get to you before I changed my mind about talking to you," said the guard.

"What's the big decision you're confronted with?" queried Shaw. "Getting married, leaving school, sell out to the pro's?"

"Worse than those," said the kid, his face flushing.

"Well, come on. Mixed up with a gambler? Scholarship funds loused up? Mad at a coach? Busting out of some class?"

"Nah! But tell me, how would you feel to have a radio crooner on the squad?" Armbruster shifted his feet, snapped the elastic at his waist with a thumb in embarrassment.

"Proceed," said the big man, a small smile at the corners of his mouth.

"I been monkeying with some audio-visual class techniques," explained the young man. "You know, we get teaching background in our physical education work. I don't know exactly how it happened, but I wrote a song and made a record of it. The guy we work with in the Iron City station, that KSTQ, snuck the thing on a disk-jockey show, and the station's mail started to surprise the guy."

"What was the name of the song you wrote?"

ARMBRUSTER stuttered: "A thing called 'The Flame in My Heart Went Out with Another.' "

"I can see why you wouldn't know exactly how you happened to write it."

"Aw, cut the rib, Coach. Anyhow it seems the local bobby-soxers went for my voice and the song. I'm getting the works published, and stand to pick up a few bucks on it. The radio guys want me to take over a sustaining spot for them, just a fifteen-minute vocal show."

"When's it go on," asked Shaw, "from midnight to twelve-fifteen, or some other fine training hour for an athlete?"

"I fixed that. They have a spot at noon, and I can make it to Iron City because I don't have a class at eleven. Besides, we've got a hook-up with that station from the University studio, same one they use to pipe out our games. But what I was thinking about was those jokers out there." He swung his head toward the locker-room. "And maybe the publicity I'd get to put the show over." He laughed nervously.

"What's the job pay?"

"That's another gimmick. Does singing on the air for a salary make me a pro in football too? What I want to know is just how the thing affects football and the squad? It only pays sixty a week for three shows." His face was anxious.

"I never had a crooner," said Shaw, "but I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll have our public-relations fellows find where we keep the University legal department and get an all-around ruling for you. Offhand, I'd say sing, kid, and let the chips fall where they may. I can see your point as far as the gang goes, and maybe some of that game chatter in the line won't do you much good, either. But you're a senior, Toddy, and maybe you'll find a future in something like that radio stuff; maybe television is just waiting for you. Anyhow, give me a few days to check it for you."

"Thanks, Coach." Armbruster turned and padded toward the door. Shaw's voice, serene and oddly cheerful, followed him.

"Toddy," he said, "you'd be surprised how much it cheers me to find a guy interested in song-writing and crooning on this club."

The guard grinned into Shaw's serious face.

Chapter Fourteen

IKE BERG TAPPED DANE ON THE ARM AS HE left the locker-room to walk downtown. "My wife and I would like you to join us for dinner tomorrow night," he said. "I understand from Perkins that you are dating the press, so I had Florence call her. She accepts with pleasure and will pick us up right after practice." Berg's dark face, its generous nose tilted slightly to the left as a memento of some ancient cleat, was grave. "Goulash cooks fine on a trailer stove. It's easy to make, and Florence wants company. What do you say? Perkins, Piskoti and Ziborsky are coming over later to bull awhile, and we'll break up about nine."

"Fixed everything nice, haven't you, Ike? What can I say except thanks a helluva lot."

They swung down the common together, headed toward Bakerston, where Berg had to catch a bus out to Central's trailer park.

Dane recalled what he knew of Berg from his earlier investigations of the squad personnel. The big man was twenty-eight, a New York youngster who had come up through one of the public schools via the scholarship route and the dogged, encouraging efforts of a delicatessen family which had already produced one of Manhattan's finest doctors. Berg had served in the Pacific with a Marine unit, had been hit on Okinawa and invalided home, to lose a year in a Navy hospital and another hitting the books at a business school before returning to college. He had married a year ago, a girl from his home neighborhood in the city. The two of them were about to become parents. Berg, an amiable clown during the squad's looser moments, was majoring in physical education; but Dane had reason to believe that, underneath his locker-room badinage, Berg was a determined, serious man.

"You're a funny guy, Dipper," said the big lineman, interrupting Dane's thoughts.

"Funny ha-ha, or funny peculiar?"

"You don't mix much, though sometimes when I'm scrabbling around that locker-room I get an idea that you'd like to, and that you could because, what the hell, the guys all seem to like you. They like the way you play this game, too."

"Anything else, Ike?"

"This isn't any of my business, you know, so shut me up if it bothers you, but the guys aren't too dumb on this ball club. You seem to spend more time with John Shaw than most of us, which isn't much like Shaw, now that I think about it. Then there was that story of Sally Whittaker's. She did a piece on me last year, so there wasn't anything too unusual about that, except for that crack about Rogalski's picture. You weren't any big buddy with Roggo, and if Shaw had wanted the print for Roggo's family, all he had to do was ask Sally. Ziborsky was a real pal of the guy's, and I wouldn't be sur-

prised if he asked you about it. Not that anybody on this club wants to pry, but you know how guys are. Hell, we gossip worse than women. You'd be ripe meat anyhow, since this is your first year on this team, and especially with the kind of ball you've been showing."

Dane slipped an arm through Berg's. "Do me a favor, Schmoe," he said. "Let's stop wondering about me for a few weeks. Some day I'll tell you the story of my life. Tell your wife I like lots of onion in the goulash."

"Like that, huh? Well, I tried," grunted the man.

"Like that. And while we're talking, I didn't know that Sally business was showing on me."

"Perkins has a keen eye. He's a self-loving hamhead most of the time, but he knows it, and it's okay. But don't flatter yourself. I figure on playing a spot of pro ball when this is all over, and it helps to stay cozy with the press. As far as anything showing on you, forget it; nothing does."

Berg swung off toward the intersection of Bakerston's main street and the Iron City cut-off to get his bus, and Dane waved a hand at him in farewell. He would eat and then study, he decided.

Central's student trailer camp, a not-so-subtle reminder of the differences between modern college life and that of a gentler past, lay two miles north of Bakerston. Some desperate organizational work by the university's AVC and some civic assistance within Iron City had brought an REA power line swinging over the hills to light the small community. The same sort of drive, financed by a special university fund, had created an artesian well which, capped, supplied a network of open pipes long since covered with rough-and-ready insulation against the hill-country winters.

Trailer Town streets were neat and trim. Many of the tidy and well-painted wheeled homes boasted small flower gardens in season. There was a pride in this community indicative of the character of the people it housed, earnest young married couples literally hacking out an education while coping with babies, minuscule budgets and, sometimes, backbreaking schedules. Pipes Johnson, the handy and frequently salty custodian of Central's general maintenance facilities, had helped many a hard-working denizen of Trailer Town with his plumbing and hardware chores. He had long and loudly confided a sane if loud opinion on the subject of Trailer Town to anyone who would listen. "I see these guys sweatin' over wrenches, shovels, books and wives, all the time helpin' each other until they fall asleep beat, and I feel like comin' downtown and heavin' rocks at the windows of Fraternity Row. There's a helluva lot of education around here but damn' little knowin'!"

Sally picked Berg and Dane up at the locker-room exit door after a brief interview with John Shaw on the team's chances with Warwick, and they rode out to the trailer village through the early night in comparative silence. Dane had a puffed lip from scrimmage, and the inside of his mouth felt sore, but the rough work for the week was ended, and nothing but a session of signal practice scheduled for the following day. They rode closely packed in Sally's coupé, with Dane in the middle and a bottle in Berg's coat jammed into his ribs.

"Vitamins for Florence," explained the grinning host, "—three kinds at five bucks a jug, iron, calcium and an all-purpose pellet for general build-up. I used to get samples from my brother, but he decided that our own doc had better prescribe for her. Bang! I'm spending money again."

Florence Berg, a petite woman with flashing dark eyes and a vivacity only slightly curbed by advanced pregnancy, met them at the trailer door and ushered them in with obvious delight. She gave Eddie Dane a warm handclasp, commented on his run in the Clinton game, and without shifting gears in her flow of conversation, welcomed Sally and asked for her coat. The trailer was a marvel of compact utility with a sense of space out of proportion to its actual size. Mrs. Berg was proud of it, and her delight at Sally's exclamations concerning it was undisguised.

The tiny home held a small bedroom with porthole windows draped with something bright in ruffled curtains, and one combination living-, dining- and utility-room with a small corner galley. The dining-room phase of the room was evident now. A table swung out from a wall and was set over a wall-bench seat big enough for two, and two card-table chairs formed the rest of the grouping. A portable screen concealed the galley, and Mrs. Berg popped behind it to check her cooking as Ike took coats to hang in a shallow, countersunk wall closet. Dane and Sally sensibly took the bench seats out of the arena of action.

"This place does tricks," explained Berg. "I'll show you a few after we eat. I can even manufacture a davenport and an easy chair for you, right out of a few folds and bends tucked around here. Cost me almost every nickel of the dough I saved overseas for it, but it's worth every dime. If you ever have trouble house-hunting, Dipper, come and see me." He moved with a sure, coordinated easiness as he talked, handing serving plates behind the screen to his wife and swooping them out to the table with a half-turning pivot.

"You ought to get Randy Perkins to work out those moves for you, Ike," said Dane lightly.

Mrs. Berg's voice bubbled from behind the screen. "Tell him, Berg."

The big guard was sheepish. "He did, the lug! We had a night out here at the end of the season last year, and we all got pretty tight. Perkins stood right about where I am now and went through a whole routine. What's more, he insisted I copy it. He claimed I'd save Florence steps and myself a lot of effort if we always set the table in this corner."

"I'll be damned," grunted Dane. Sally laughed at him, and Florence emerged from behind the screen with a delighted giggle.

They ate lightheartedly, with Berg outlining an idea for a suspended crib for the baby, to be hung from the ceiling, with Sally outlining the merits of the Iron City Municipal Hospital as Florence beamed upon them all. The goulash, well seasoned, hurt the inside of Dane's bruised mouth, but with a disdain born of hunger and an appreciation of the Berg cooking, he ate hugely anyhow. His efforts did not escape the bulking Berg, however.

"Chewing to your left tonight, eh, kid? Who handed you that lip today?"

"Don't know," answered Eddie. "Caught an elbow going down on that end sweep last time we ran it." He grinned thoughtfully, the play going through his head. "One more step, and I'd have been away."

"That's the one you don't get, son."

"Let's get the things moved away before the rest of those man-monsters get here and clutter up my floor," suggested Florence. "Everybody's leaving early, so we might as well have all the time we can together." She teetered upright as she spoke. "These things are very bad for your sense of balance, Sally," she said, patting her abdomen.

Dane and Ike dismantled the table. Ike cleared off the dishes, piled them into the galley for washing. They left the wall bench, swung out another section to make one fairly long davenport, and from a space beneath it Ike fished out a seat cover and cushions. The room changed completely before a horn beeped outside and the trailer took on the extra weight of Perkins, Ziborsky and Piskoti. They had been there before and often, from the way they piled coats into a corner and sprawled on the floor.

"Roll around some," said Florence, needling them with a small woman's flair for harassing big men. "I didn't dust today, and you might pick up whatever dirt's around for me."

They hooted at her, called her little mother and threatened to spoil the baby as soon as it arrived. Then, naturally enough, they were all talking shop, seriously, like the craftsmen they were; and the two girls listened, relaxed, comfortable.

"We're gonna get out at a bad time to make anything from pro ball," said Piskoti slowly. He looked at Dane. "You know, I guess, that Perkins, Ike and I have definite pro offers, and that they're smelling around for Zibby too." He grinned at Sally. "The paper had a story about the Eagles looking over the squad a year ago.

"I have an idea that the old two-league dough is about washed up for us, though." He nodded his massive, blond head sadly. "Two years late, that's us."

Berg grunted. "That's the rub that makes you think it might be smarter to look for something for the long haul rather than waste another year, or two or whatever, playing for pay. Maybe try for a high-school coaching job to really learn the trade, and then work up."

"It's been fancy for the players since the All America Conference, though," interrupted Perkins; "and personally I'm going to latch on to at least one fancy year before they blow the lid off. That's promised." He rose gracefully, whirled three times in the same spot, crossed his fingers and flopped on the floor again. "And that's for luck and no serious injuries.

"Look at the statistics, though," he continued. "The Philly Eagles win a championship in their own division, go on to win the play-off, and what happened? Lex Thompson announces his club has lost thirty-two thousand bucks on the season. It lost about fifty grand the year before. Take the All America league, and only one club, the Forty-Niners, show a profit, and the Chicago Rockets dropped more than three hundred thousand. Club owners can't stand that sort of thing and stay in business."

They argued the intricacies of pro ball until it was almost time to leave; then they conned Florence into making a pot of coffee. They were drinking it when Ziborsky leaned over and tapped Dane on the knee. "Hey, Dipper," he said, "now I know you some better, what's the business about Roggo's picture that Sally wrote about in that story? What'd you want it for?" He wrinkled his brow slowly. "Hell, Roggo and I banged around a lot together. I never knew he had a brother."

"Few people did," said Dane easily. "That's why Shaw thought it would be nice to get the print and send it to the family. I just happened to be in his office with him when Sally mentioned that she had it, the day she came down to do the story."

"So you just went along for the ride to pick it up?"

"That's about it." He could feel Sally's eyes upon him.

"Doesn't make any difference, I guess," she said, "but I think it was your idea to pick up that print instead of John Shaw's."

"Dane smane, Shaw, smaw, what say you all move? It's nine-thirty. My wife needs her sleep, and so do I," said Berg.

THE ride back to Bakerston was short, direct, for Dane and Sally. It was a stormy one; and neither, recalling it later, could say who started the argument. They fought soberly, and with an intensity that surprised them both. "First your head, then this picture thing again. You—there's something not quite right about you, Eddie. I don't know what it is, but I told you once before I can't stand your lying to me."

"There's no lying in telling you to mind your own business," explained Dane sharply.

"You are my business," she said softly, "now."

"Some days business is bad, then; and maybe we ought to let it ride that way, or else go out of business."

"You want it that way?"

"I don't want it any way. Don't put words in my mouth."

"It would be silly. I couldn't believe them, anyhow."

He closed the door of the car softly as she stopped before his rooming-house, and strode up the walk without looking back as her car spurted up the street.

Chapter Fifteen

IT WAS SHAW'S CUSTOM TO HOLD HIS SQUAD together the entire day of a game. The team reported to the Central gym building at eight in the morning for fruit juice, vitamins and a final chalk talk on the opposition. At nine-thirty the squad sat down to breakfast, generally steak or chops, a light salad of fruit, and tea and toast. From ten-thirty to noon it rested either on the cots lined through the gym floor and the basketball locker-room, or in the big chairs of the gym-house lobby, where reading was permitted. At twelve-thirty two chartered buses carried the team to the stadium, despite the fact that the distance involved was an easy walk. Shaw had once had a regular back turn an ankle on that saunter. Since then he had taken no last-minute chances.

Outside the building a light drizzle was falling. The rain had begun about dawn, and from the gray despondency of the skies, threatened to continue throughout the afternoon. Although Shaw had already given orders to leave the field tarpaulins on until the last minute, the club would go into mud cleats by halftime if the rain persisted or grew heavier. The effect of bad weather and bad footing on any team geared to a T-formation attack was apparent on Shaw's face and in the gravity with which he issued instructions.

The sullenness of the day matched the somber viciousness of Dane's mood, a mood which had persisted since his fight with Sally, and one which he had unleashed several times in unwarranted energy during the previous day's light signal workout. His attitude had not gone unnoticed by the eagle-eyed coaching staff.

"Dane's looking a bit mean," Ames reported to Shaw, and at Shaw's questioning glance, amplified his statement. "No squad friction, just a nastiness that gives the impression that he'd like to tee off on somebody. He may be up a bit high for the game, but it isn't that kind of edginess."

"We'll see," said the big man. "I'm going to start him."

The game itself was not on Dane's mind.

There had been no word from Connor in Washington. Dane's routine reports to the regional office in Iron City had been perfunctory, and as usual, unsatisfactory to him. The case was not static, however. He had, from time to time, observed some vaguely familiar faces driving milk- and bread-trucks in the vicinity of Slanp's neighborhood, and knew that the routine observation, probably the movie photography of visitors to the Professor's apartment house, was going its inexorable way. As far as the Iron City police were concerned, the Rogalski incident was closed as a hit-and-run case, with no evidence apparent on the death car or driver.

He had thought of calling Sally, but a strange stubbornness alien to his own appraisal of his character, precluded it. He was out, he told himself, where he should have been in the first place; and until the job was done, he would stay out. The thought gave him no comfort at all.

Something of his reflections was mirrored in the thin set of his lips and a narrowness at the corners of his eyes as he lay flat on the cot in the gym; and so concentrated was his thinking that Shaw's voice reached him twice before the

words made sense. He looked up at the big man standing beside his cot.

"I told you that the lineups will be posted as usual," said Shaw. "But you might like to know that you're starting the ball game. How do you feel?"

"Great," said Dane. There was a friendly directness as his eyes met Shaw's, but nothing more. "Thanks."

"There's a spot near the forty-yard line on the east side of the field—"

"Wetter than any other because of bad drainage. Don't try to cut too sharply in that area on a day like this," finished Dane for him. He looked past the big man's shoulders toward the gym window, where, it seemed, the rain was driving harder. "Do we go into mud gear before kickoff?"

"We'll see down there," answered the coach, and swung away. "Stay loose if you can."

A student manager, with a handful of mimeographed sheets, claimed Shaw's attention. "Starting lineups and last-minute notes for the press box to check against programs," Dane heard the young man say. "Want to check 'em?" He closed his eyes and willed his muscles slack. He dozed, stayed in semi-haze until it was time to leave.

WARWICK was big, solid through the line, with a set of rangy backs. Scouting reports on the team's two previous victories denied the club reserve strength, a condition which sometimes made little difference if a team was up. And all of Central's opposition was forever up, thanks to Shaw's consistent record. Dane recalled that fact standing on his own five-yard line awaiting the whistle. There was the pre-game tremor at the back of his thighs, and unconsciously, he pranced a bit to relieve it. The rain had turned into a gentler mizzle, with a faint spraying, atomizer feeling against his face.

Central was in black again, but at the crotch of Dane's pants and at the armpits there was a powdery smudge of white—rosin dusting, to make ball-handling more certain. He fidgeted, his mood, his irritation building; and then the referee's blast was shrilling over the field, and he watched the men before him check, turn and come back to form the blocking pattern. Perkins' voice, cutting sharp above the roar of the crowd, came clear. "Take it, Dipper!" Then the ball, well booted, was tumbling just short of him. He picked up drive and the ball simultaneously, caught blockers from the corners of his eyes, slanted up the middle, running easily, cagily until the charging defenders formed their design.

The blocking was audible, and he was among it now, veering for an opening to his right. He was running hard, legs driving with a short, sprinting viciousness, his full stride denied in the close quarters. Then two tacklers boomed into the space before him. He was trapped, lowered his shoulder, and with a ramming, butting drive he punished those tacklers, riding into and over them for extra yards until he fell, exulting in the impact. He brought the ball out to the Central forty, a thirty-yard runback, and the crowd filled the stadium with sound.

Warwick spread an offset, six-man line against them, a bit overshifted to the right against their balanced line. In the huddle Perkins was curt. "Take it again, Dipper," he snapped at Dane. He called the play. The team settled easily. The ball spatted into Perkins' hands from Peterson. There was a fake, a second fake with Perkins playing Nijinsky and Houdini, and then Dane was driving up the middle through a brief slot in the line, humped over the ball with his legs driving, churning into a small spot of daylight. The Warwick safety man coming up fast made the tackle, and again Dane lowered that shoulder and rode into the tackler, bruising and busting for extra yardage. The fever was on him now, and with it a release of his black mood.

He made twelve yards pushing the ball past midfield into Warwick territory. Perkins, quickly aware of his weapon, used it, and once again Dane blasted up the middle, running with an icy, deliberate, almost trouble-seeking fury that carried another eight yards with half the big Warwick line smothering him into the wet turf. Warwick called time out.

Central grouped in a ragged huddle, wiping faces glistening with sweat and rain on towels brought by the trainers and student managers. Dane moved restlessly, eager to resume play, and there was an answering fire in the set faces of the deep breathing men about him. The whistle called them back to work. First down on Warwick's forty, the game three plays old and that rugged Warwick line tough and determined before them. The play was a sweep, with Dane the man in motion to the left, and Tripelda taking a Perkins handoff. It went for six more. There was chatter in the huddle. Daniels, playing offensive end, grunted: "My guy's drifting a foot or so wide, and he might sucker for a thing inside." Peterson said: "Their guard spacing has changed again too. Want to try down the slot again." Perkins shushed them, flipped a glance at Dane, called the play. It was a short, quick pass into the flat, and Daniels buttonhooked for it, fought his way to a first down.

Warwick was big and dead game, but Central's deceptive attack was persistent. The ball moved down to the twenty, to the fifteen; and then Perkins fired a pitch-out to Dane, who raced into the end zone for the score. Perkins kicked the point with an easy precision, and the club trotted back up the field with the defensive unit coming in. Shaw let Dane stay with the defense. He was playing concentrated ball now, and playing it with a lifting fire that took him automatically to the heart of action.

Back on the sideline Perkins recapped the scoring play and the events leading to it for Shaw. He gave it to the big man succinctly: "The Dipper's coked. He's hotter than a nickel cigar."

The fact was evident. Warwick, running from a variation of the single wing with a hocus-pocus spinner, moved two plays against the strong side of their line, watched its blocking dissipate against Central's line play, saw its runners smashed flat by Dane coming up sprinting to make tackles. The rain was coming faster now, and a gaining wind began to blow it in gusts. Warwick, its attack halted, kicked. Schwartz, playing safety in the defensive unit, let it land soggily, watched it die with scarcely a bounce.

SHAW sent the offensive unit back into the game. The officials were drying the ball, swapping it frequently with others tossed in from the sidelines. The turf was sleek, the footing treacherous; and Perkins, playing cautiously, whanged away at the middle and at the tackles. Dane, his ball-carrying violence undimmed, raged at the gummy betrayal of the ground, found profane sympathy from Tripelda and Floyd. Still Central made yardage, held the ball with a tenacity that finally led the stubborn forwards of Warwick into penalties for offsides, for unnecessary roughness. Central scored again just before the gun ended the half, when Perkins, offering the ball to everybody but the boxholders, finally tucked it against his hip and fled around end on a bootleg play for the touchdown. He missed the point.

The second half was played in gumbo, neither team showing anything but a fortitude for rain and spongy turf. Warwick, its courage high, drove down to Central's twenty and fumbled away its opportunity as Berg, flopping on the vagrant ball, almost buried it under the impact of his body. And then it was over.

It ended for Dane eight minutes before the final gun when Shaw, sending in a substitution, waved him to the lockers, where he stood beneath the showers soaking heat and steam into a grateful body that was curiously relaxed, not yet answering its inevitable bruising with stiffening aches. He felt purged, light and free, and he

nursed the feeling. Old Dan was waiting for him as he left the water and began to towel. "Over on the table for you," he said. "It was a grand game, boy, and I'll rub it out of you right now."

He was still on the table when the gang clumped in, banging each other on the back, filling the room with noise and dirt. Perkins, looking like a sandhog's apprentice reporting from a mucky river bottom, strode over to the rubbing-table, put a filthy hand on Dane's chest, bent and rubbed an equally dirty face against his brow. "That's for love," he clowned. Ziborsky and Berg, grinning behind Perkins, threw mud pellets over old Dan's shoulders at him.

Shaw, making his round of the room, looked down at him, an appreciative twinkle in his deep-set eyes. "You okay?"

Dane grunted. "Feel fine."

Then Shaw moved away; and Dane, slapped off the table by one of old Dan's mammoth hands, padded over to his locker to dress. . . .

The Rose Room of the Steel Hotel was crowded as usual with its Saturday-night guests; Dane, sitting with Perkins, Peterson, Piskoti and Thomas, watched the ebb and flow of the diners. They had driven to the city in Peterson's old Pierce-Arrow limousine, an antiquated relic once the property of an undertaker, which Peterson had acquired for a hundred dollars while in the throes of an idea built about a campus jitney service. Still quiet and subdued, Dane loafed through oysters, lamb chops and head lettuce, listening to his companions' banter about the game.

"Hell," remarked Thomas, "on a dry field, we'd have scored at least twice more." Perkins nodded thoughtfully. "I only tossed five passes all afternoon," he added. "But don't kid yourself. Warwick would have rammed a couple over too. The weather played as much hell with their spinners as it did with any of our stuff. It was a ball game all the way. Makes me wonder about Catholic. That club is supposed to be hotter than Warwick."

Dane, grunting agreement, felt eyes upon him, looked up to see Sally, Timmy Watts and a woman, apparently Tim's wife, approaching a nearby table. There was an appeal in Sally's eyes, a barely noticeable tremble at the corner of her lips. He nodded to her gravely, and she turned suddenly and sat down.

She was still sitting, her back turned away from his table, when they finished wrangling over the check and rose to leave. He was last in the line past her table. As he went by, he reached out impulsively, rested his hand lightly on her shoulder, and without pausing, moved on, his eyes steadily ahead.

Following Peterson's broad back, he neared the doorway. A slim, almost dapper man in a dark blue suit stood within and to one side of the entrance. He was chatting softly and in a careless fashion with Connor. Dane let his glance rest briefly on Connor's bird-of-prey features and brushed by without speaking. Things, he thought, as they left the hotel and moved up the street to find a movie, were about to pop.

Chapter Sixteen

TWO DECADES AGO, WHEN THE CAUTIOUS athletic board of Central University first scheduled Catholic University, sportsmen said that Ducky Mather, head coach of the Shamrocks, never lost a ball game in November. It made no difference that the statement was apocryphal. The mere fact that it existed at all was reason enough for the schedule-makers to insist that the game come early in the autumnal program for both teams. Catholic, a power in the game, extended the courtesy because it figured Central, not yet in the big time, to be a pushover. Central, grateful in the smug thought that it might some day sneak over an early season upset, accepted the spot and congratulated itself on a set plan achieved.

Dane never saw the second shot fly wide into the bookshelves.

Both schools had, in time, come to rue the deal.

Central, under Shaw, knocked Catholic over as often as Catholic, still guided by the aging Mather, belted over Central. In the process the game had become a national classic, and such was the intensity of interest it created that subsequent schedule-makers, with an appreciative eye on the fat early season gate, continued the original contract. Coaches could howl about time needed to bring squads to peaks. Big money in October was so nice, especially when followed by more of the same attracted by the traditional games of November. With high Federal taxes drying up the traditional alumni endowment circles more each year, plaintive coaching staffs could go yodel in the end zone. Central continued to meet the Shamrocks as its third foe of the season.

Central stadium was a sellout, most years, by the first week of October. The game was always a premium one for scalpers. There was not much surprise in the area when on Monday of game week Faculty Manager R. Hanson Willits of Central issued a statement regretting the fact that there were premium-priced tickets on the market, and soberly enumerating the very proper ticket distribution system followed by the University.

Eyebrows were hiked the next day, however, when Central's president Charles Hughes Bixford, gravely concerned with current reports of ticket scalping, issued a statement asking for additional police vigilance to curb a condition which might endanger the splendid relationship between the two universities.

His words made the morning papers. They were expanded in the evening editions of the area and spread upon the wire services later in the day as Agent-in-Charge Jason James of the F.B.I. stated that he was bringing in additional men to watch for possible liberties with Federal taxes on tickets, and to coöperate with the university authorities and the Iron City police wherever Federal jurisdiction warranted.

James' contribution to the hubbub had several results. A handful of visiting sportsmen, taking no chances, left town lest past infractions in interstate commerce catch up to them. Three bookmaking establishments, a bit behind in local protection payments, closed their doors, not from fear of legal difficulties, but just in case. The general public paid little attention beyond conversational gasps at the prices of tickets invented in various quarters and published as gospel. It was part of the excitement of Central-Catholic game week. But as Connor, Agent-in-Charge James of the Iron City region, and the dapper man Connor introduced as Wilfred Yoke of the Department of Justice explained, it was good preliminary.

Shaw had the squad quartered several miles outside Iron City at the Sedgewood Country Club, where it had been since Monday night, holding its workouts on a practice field set up on one of the fairways, and living as a unit in the luxurious quarters designed for the area's industrial barons. Shaw used the country club for this purpose twice a season, for Catholic, and later for State, both key games in most years.

They sat, Connor, James, Yoke, Shaw and Dane, in the manager's office at the club while Connor reviewed the events of his past week in Washington for the big man and for Dane. For Shaw, under the tension of bringing his squad to a peak for the game and busy with countless details, there was only the relief of Connor's promise that the case might reach its end in the Bakerston-Iron City area.

"Where it goes from here," explained Connor, "is anybody's guess. But we are applying our pressure, and whether or not it makes us a break, we are picking up our man on his past record."

"Do I know him?" asked Shaw.

"You do," interrupted Yoke; "but from here on in, none of this will be any of your business. Needless to say, you will receive official appreciation of your coöperation from the chief of the department."

"How about Dane? He's still on my squad. Can I figure him as part of my business from now on, or does he leave the campus?"

Connor grinned. "I'll answer that." He turned to Dipper. "I have a copy of your release from special duty, the one promised you a year ago. You can go your own gait from here on, after this end of the job's done, or you can remain in the department. I have been asked to solicit your approval of the latter—strongly, I might add." He paused; but Dane, waiting, made no comment. "Should you decide to stay in school or make a career elsewhere," continued Connor, "I have been asked to have you consider remaining on our inactive list with the possibility of sporadic duty in the future."

Dane glanced at Shaw. "You've still got a ball-player," he said softly.

"I've still got a hired man," snapped Connor. "We are breaking the story from the Washington end for the Sunday papers, citing evidence of the existence of conspiracy and espionage, together with the full confession made by our recent convert, and such actual names as necessary. All of them will be familiar to the man here. We are indicating the likelihood of further disclosures, stating that future arrests for questioning are about to be made.

"Monday morning Dane will make the actual pickup here—for two reasons. We think he's known; he's leaving the case, so it won't make much difference if his identity is revealed. Mr. James, as agent-in-charge of this region, will work with him. Dane and James will also arrange to have local speculation made public to the effect that the presence of additional Federal men in the area may not be tied directly to game tickets. I'd suggest you both see the *Independent* publisher on Friday." Connor stopped, looked at the dapper Yoke, who, tilted back in a chair, swung his legs gently as he listened. The man straightened his chair, and spoke softly.

"There is probably no valid reason to expect trouble," he said, "but some odd things have happened to people under investigation lately. It could be that the abrupt curtailment of your man's usefulness means sudden curtailment of the man himself, once this news breaks."

"Then again, there is always the chance that a suspect of the type involved, aware of incipient ruin, whether or not he can be legally punished, will decide to turn nasty at the moment of pickup, and either remove himself or the agent, or perhaps both. Of course, a man of proved mental caliber such as the one involved might calmly accept his status with dignity, and toss the burden of proof upon us, knowing that his chances for complete release are pretty good. I merely mention the possibilities from past experience with similar cases." He smiled faintly and without humor. "Mr. Dane will meet his own problems, however. Strangely enough, our surveillance also offers your man a certain amount of protection from those he doubtless considers his friends. That's about it."

"Let me get it straight," said Dane: "I'll stay here with the team until Friday, and then Shaw excuses me for part of the day. James picks me up, and we see the publisher; then we arrange details for Monday. That right?"

"Right," answered Connor. "And that ought to do it on this end for the time being."

Dane and Shaw sat for a while after Connor, James and Yoke left. "How much good do you think you'll be against Catholic with all this on your mind?" asked the big man gravely. "This is a real tough one, and make no mistake about it. That club is as good as ours."

"All I can tell you," said Dane, "is that I generally play one game at a time. But it's your decision and your ball team."

Shaw nodded. "There's a lot to work out yet."

The rest of the week Shaw ran Rodrigues with the first offensive unit and alternated Dane. Squad spirit built slowly through the middle of the week as the coaching staff drove their men through a set of new sequences and alternate defenses. By Thursday the indefinable edginess which marks a keyed team was apparent. It showed in a more subdued locker-room, in the abatement of usual noise in the dormitories and in the dining-room. It was manifest in the concentrated attention Shaw got when running movies of Catholic's previous games, in the rapt attention paid to his chalk talks.

Shaw cut his Thursday practice short for a press conference arranged by the University's public-relations department, put the squad under wraps while some twenty reporters were given a brief glimpse of a signal drill. Dane, tossing passes in a sweat suit, saw Sally gayly chatting with the group. She waved to him, and he waved back. She walked down the sideline of the practice field with Ainsley Ames, and Ames beckoned him off.

"Hi," she said. "Just wanted to say hello, and ask if you felt up to last week's effort."

He glanced at Ames. "We all think it will be very tough out there," he said; and Ames nodded sagely like a man getting the proper responses to an old litany.

"I just wanted to wish you my best," she said. There was an appeal in her eyes, and he met it with a slow, serious nod.

"Thanks, Sally," he said. "I'll call you." He loped back on the field, leaving Ames with a puzzled wrinkle on his forehead at the sudden radiance on Sally's face.

Jason James picked Dane up at the club at ten o'clock the next day; and Dane, sticking his head in the manager's office where Shaw made his headquarters, found the big man brusque and harassed. "Sure, go with James. Be at the stadium at noon if you can't make it back here again today. But try to make it back. Understand?" He waved his arms. "There's a fine touch of confusion around here, which I don't appreciate at the moment," he snapped. "I just got word that Mrs. Berg has picked this weekend to have her baby. She's on her way to the hospital in Iron City, and I have to tell Ike about it. He'll want to go in too. Why don't I just call old Ducky Mather and call the damn' game off, or maybe ask in a gang of girls and let the whole crew get drunk? Go on, go on, before I lose my mind."

They left the big man pacing in his office, and drove into Iron City. The town was wearing big-game dress, with shop windows decorated in college colors, and banners swung from theater marquees. The Steel Hotel wore a bright display sign which ran half the length of the building. "BEAT CATHOLIC," it read. Even the crowds in the streets had a festive air, and from time to time, waving knots of people turned into handshaking contests among returned alumni.

The Shamrock squad had arrived that morning from Chicago and was quartered at the Central gym and field house in Bakerston, so that it might work out in the stadium.

Dane and James went directly to the *Independent* building. They found Osgood Hebert, the publisher, in his walnut-paneled office on the third floor. He was a short, intense man with a fringe of iron-gray hair and a vestful of cigar ashes. He gazed at them shrewdly, making no attempt to interrupt as James concisely went over as much of the situation as seemed necessary, and made his request for Hebert's coöperation. He was not a man who needed blueprints of any given circumstances. He ran his paper, and much of the area's political structure, with a driving energy and a volatile temperament that had long since won him both respect and a reputation for judgment.

When James had finished, he pushed a button on his desk and spoke: "I'm calling in my managing editor and issuing instructions. You check them as I give them. This paper will do all it can to help." While they waited, he turned to Dane. "You going to play tomorrow?" he asked. "I never miss a game," he said at Dane's unspoken question. "Furthermore, young man, after some forty-odd years in this business, I am seldom surprised, but you amaze me. I want you to stop by for a chat after you find time for visiting again."

JAMES and Dane met Timmy Watts at the elevator as they left Hebert's office. "You're pretty far off the reservation, aren't you?" he asked Dane.

"I'm temporarily excused for an hour or two," said the Dipper.

"Well, luck," flipped Watts as he watched them enter the car.

Then he turned and walked down the corridor. He stuck his head in the receptionist's nook outside Hebert's office, grinned impishly as the severe woman who acted as a buffer for Hebert's visitors frowned at him over her typewriter. "Miss Zink," he said, "you get prettier every day. Remind me to tell you more often."

"Okay, tell me. What's on your mind?"

"What did that football player want with the boss?"

"There was no football player in here," she said.

"The two guys that just left," insisted Timmy.

"A pair of Federal cops. Want to talk to the boss about his business?"

"No-o-o," said Watts reflectively. "Just tell him we're in love, and get raises for both of us."

"Out, Watts."

He made his way back to the sports department, sat silently at his desk, and when Sally Whittaker finally showed up, he called her over to him.

"Redhead, how well do you know Dipper Dane by now?"

She looked at him steadily. "Real well, I think," she said. "And I'm not kicking this around, but there's a chance I'll know about as well as a girl can know anybody."

She felt a tightness at her throat, searched the gravity of Watts' angular face. "He goes to school," she said. "He plays a good brand of football, and he's majoring in journalism. Give with it, Timmy."

"His heart belongs to J. Edgar Hoover, I think," said Tim. "He's a Federal agent. What's the story?"

She pulled a chair over and sat down slowly, her mind racing, adding, subtracting unexplained details. She beamed on the waiting Watts. "Timmy, you are a darling," she said.

"Well, I'll be go to hell," grunted Watts.

Chapter Seventeen

THE SCORE WAS TIED AT THE HALF. PERKINS passed to Floyd in the end zone midway through the first period and converted the point. Catholic marched seventy yards overland during the second quarter and finally rammed into paydirt. The kick was good. The big black scoreboards at each end of the stadium read: 7 to 7.

The crowd, limp and subdued from the excitement of the first half, watched Central's band march down the field and maneuver into a giant C. Cheerleaders along the sidelines raised their arms as the band, brasses blazing, blared into Central's "Alma Mater." On the upper edge of the stadium two ushers were assisting a man with a heart attack down the concrete steps, carrying him to the medical-room beneath the stands, where two similar cases had preceded him. The flags, flying from their short staffs placed along the topmost edge of the huge edifice took added richness from the bright blue of the cloudless sky.

There were nearly seventy thousand people jammed into Central stadium, and for thirty minutes, not including time-outs, they had watched two equally adept T-running teams dissipate their attacks on seemingly well-matched defenses.

Shaw was improving Central's defense as the squad rested in the locker-room, chewing dextrose tablets and sipping small paper cups of orange juice. He was calm, businesslike, almost casual. "Berg," he said, "I've had three checks now from our spotters. Daley, their quarterback, is putting his front foot up very close, in fact, beneath his center's legs as he takes that ball. Watch for that—all you linemen, and especially you guards. If that foot looks too close to you, submarine and try for a grab at it as he takes the ball. If we can encourage one fumble in there, it might mean the ball game." His voice was firm but low. "Dane, Rodrigues, all you halfbacks—take any first man down on their passes this half. We'll try a four-man line and let our ends float against passes into the flat. The inside line backers can watch for buttonhooks. Perkins, take the wraps off your variation on the pitchout if you find a spot anywhere from midfield on, the one we worked with all this week. Use Dane on the play to the right. Switch Floyd from the fullback spot to half on the same play to the left. You hike right over behind the play and stay there in case of interceptions."

The big man looked at his wristwatch. "Almost time to go back to work." He gazed keenly at the drawn, serious faces before him. "The only reason I want this ball game,

you know, is the fact that I just can't stand the thought of Ike Berg's son being born the day Central lost to Catholic. It might frustrate him for life." He grinned easily. "On your feet, you guys. I'm proud of you."

They hit the tunnel yelling.

In the press box Sally Whittaker banged away at her story with the undercarriage of her portable nudging a steaming paper container of coffee at the end of each line she wrote. At her elbow Tim Watts brought the diagrams up to the end of the half and totaled his statistics. He put his pencil down and picked up a pair of binoculars with which he scanned the stadium; then he focused them on the Central squad, caught Dane in the glasses and held him a moment. "Damn and double damn!" he muttered. He could go to Hebert and ask about Dane. That would be simple. Hebert expected his men to dig out information. Then again, if Hebert had wanted the facts known, he would have called Watts in and given them to him. Something was cooking, and he had missed it. The thought irritated him. He wondered again at Sally's reaction. She had seemed pleased, curiously relieved when he told her that Dane appeared to be a cop. He glanced at her, noted her concentration, and looked down at the field again. The teams were lining up.

On the other side of the stadium Stuart Slanp, his ascetic face grave beneath a gray felt hat, also peered through a pair of glasses at the field. There was a communicable tension in such spectacles, he decided, a dangerous excitement for a man who had so long repressed his emotional urges, and it underlined the foreboding feeling he had carried for weeks now. Dane was not starting this second half. He moved the glasses in front of the Central bench, now emptied as the players and coaches stood along the sideline for the kickoff. He picked out Dane's face, a set, strong face, eagerly fixed on the playing-field, with apparently no other thoughts behind it than those concerned with the tumbling ball rising through the air. The rasp-throated, chuffing roar of the crowd interrupted his speculation, and the rough, jostling impact of a spectator knocked the glasses from his eyes. The game was on.

Directly behind the goal-posts, midway to the stadium rim in the end-zone seats, Connor also watched the teams meet, savored the crisp, sharp blocking and the sudden, tangling pileup as Catholic, kicking off, stopped Floyd of Central on the Blue and Gold's eighteen-yard line. There was nothing to do now but enjoy the game, a game which could be enjoyed, until the play made in his own grimmer and seldom resolved game produced an effect.

Perkins ran three plays between the tackles, and Central chopped out exactly seven yards to the twenty-five. Then he pulled the club into punt formation and booted the ball for the sideline, away from Zwick, the Catholic safety man, and a shifty runner. The ball hopped out on the Shamrock forty. Shaw waved his defensive unit into the game, Dane with it.

The Catholic line was big, fast and rough. It played with a mean concentration and a smartness born of good coaching. There was little difference in the two lines today. Berg accounted for it. The big guard was playing near the edge of recklessness, with only the instinctive savvy gained from long experience preventing him from sucker moves against the canny Catholic traps. His face was bruised. There was a cut over one eye and the left side of his mouth was a crimson smear.

Catholic tried a split buck into the middle; and Berg, submarining, checked the play long enough for Piskoti and Ziborsky to pile blockers and runner into a heap. It was tough down that slot. Catholic tried the outside, found a hole and went for four yards. Daley set his team, barked the play into movement, faded to pass.

The pattern evolved to the strong side, and Dane picked up the first man through, staying behind him with a choppy, seemingly off-balance stride until the ball socketed into the air. It came in a ragged, wabbly spiral; apparently it had been tipped by one of Central's swarming linemen. Intended for the deep man, it was falling short.

Dane broke his drifting, dancing motion and sprinted up for it. He tipped it, juggled it, held it and darted for the sideline, yelling. He watched his teammates check, begin the changing blocking patterns. One of Catholic's ends tried for a sleeve tackle, and Dane shrugged past him. He slowed, and from the corner of his eye saw Armbruster drive a bright green jersey into the turf with a cross block, and then he was moving in high gear. He passed his own thirty-five, reversed his field and fled past the forty into Catholic territory and streaked for the open field.

Zwick, nearly as fast as Dane, raced him for the lane along the sideline, running the short leg of the angle, and with a desperate dive nicked Dane's heels, spilled him out of bounds a half-stride away from a dead clear field. It was Central's ball on the Shamrock thirty-eight.

The offensive unit was back in the ball game before the officials had waved the chain down and moved the ball in to the field of play. Central huddled, and Perkins gave them no time to wonder. "Shaw wants the pitch-out variation to the right. Okay. Let's go on the fourth digit." He snapped his signals, his voice shrill, arrogant and cocksure.

Dane, the man in motion, broke to the right, and the play spun behind him. He hesitated, took the accurately rifled ball from Perkins. Catholic had scouted those pitch-outs well. Dane, hesitating, watched the end check, saw the Shamrock halfback come up fast. He faded back, back, noting the momentary lack of movement in the man opposite him, and then they were breaking, charging in on him. Linemen were spilling toward him. He continued to fade. Far down the field he spotted Daniels sprinting along the sideline on the left side of the field, well beyond the Shamrock secondary and still moving. He pulled back his arm and heaved a long, arcing, leading pass for the corner. He watched Daniels' arms go up sweetly, surely and take the ball without breaking stride. Then he was flat on his back with a big Catholic tackle driving an elbow into his solar plexus.

The pandemonium in the stands told him that the play was good, told the man on his chest the same thing at the same instant, for Dane watched a despairing frown cross his face. Dane grinned into his eyes before he shook him off and rose to his feet. Daniels was still in the end zone, holding the ball and jumping up and down like an animated pogo stick in sheer exultation.

From rim to rim the stadium was a heaving mass of shifting color, and the noise broke as if someone had crammed a tidal wave down a subway, with a billowing, amplified surf sound.

They huddled to convert the point, and Thomas spit into the palm of his hand. He threw two teeth at Perkins' feet. "Make it good," he said. "I just paid for one." Perkins delivered.

The big drum of numerals on the scoreboards revolved slowly, and a fourteen replaced the seven for Central.

Central kicked off with Wienstock lifting the ball down to the Shamrock goal-line. The game got rougher. Dane, coming up to make a tackle, caught a fist in the face and an elbow in the back of his neck as two blockers poured it on. His knees broke beneath him as he tried to stand after the play, and then he was led off the field with old Dan murmuring endearments at his side.

Armbruster, his left eye looking like something at the business end of a potato masher, came off shortly afterward, talking to himself. Catholic moved that ball. The Shamrocks, a sound, fighting team, slammed it out in short, driving gains past midfield, and with time running out, went into the air. Central fought back. Catholic

took it down to the Blue and Gold thirty before Berg, a sodden, sweating smear of a man, charging under the Shamrock center, hooked Daley's leg enough to kill the pivot and forced a fumble. When the referee pried them apart, Peterson had the ball again.

Shaw took Perkins out, sent in his second-string quarterback, Ferroldi, and called the plays from the bench, a series of end sweeps. He sent in Rodrigues, Teebold and Wisneiwitz, all comparatively fresh, and opened up the game, running Catholic from one side of the field to the other, and biting off yardage in three-, five-, seven-yard cracks. Catholic dragged out its tired backs and ends, matched the running game.

Shaw and old Ducky Mather of Catholic were still playing human chess when the final gun went off, and Berg's new kid had his present.

In spite of strong-armed stadium guards on the doors, the dressing-room was jammed with players, coaches and those curious well-wishers and enthusiastic visitors spawned by the public-relations staff and university officialdom. Old Dan and the squad doctor cursed with a soft intent flow as they moved around the rooms and the offset leading to the showers. Dan's assistants fought for arm room at the rubbing-tables. Then Shaw's booming voice echoing over the hubbub slowly cleaned the visitors out. They took most of the excitement with them, and most of the noise.

Dane, tired, dressed slowly, completely relaxed, and let the sounds of the locker-room pour over him. Perkins, at the bench beside him, sat in his underwear and pondered a sock languidly. "It was quite a thing in there today," he said. "I feel as though I'd been chewed and spit."

Buckets Dugan approached them. "Shaw's taking the guys back to the country club for the night," he said, "all except the guys who want to be excused. You'll get a swell dinner, a movie and lots of early sack-time if you want it."

Perkins made no comment. Dugan continued. "There isn't any must about this deal," he amplified. "He doesn't give a damn if anybody goes back, really. But the country club's there and ready if we want it."

"To hell with the joint," interrupted Piskoti over Dugan's shoulder. "My girl came up for the weekend. There's a party at the house, and I promised her some fun. I ain't goin'."

"Well, there's still time to make up your minds," grunted Dugan, and moved on.

Berg jostled by, dripping water, the left side of his face swollen. He was humming. "I'm going in to see Mamma and the boy," he said to Dane. "You guys headed for Iron City?"

"No," muttered Dane. "I think I'll eat, buy a two-bit cowboy novel and hit the hay in my own digs. I'm sick of looking at you guys. You remind me of a hard day." His grin took the edge off the words. He pulled a sports coat over his shoulder and stuck his necktie in his pocket. He walked across the room as John Shaw, his arm linked within the arm of an elderly gray-haired man, intercepted him. The older man, faint humor lines etched at the corners of his eyes, grinned at him wryly.

"Dipper, I want you to meet Ducky Mather," said the big man. "I want to warn you, though, that he hates you today." Catholic's coach grinned, gave Dane a keen, direct glance. "That was a fine game, lad," he said; "but John's right. I'd have been just as happy if you, and Perkins, and that fellow Berg had all stayed home." He jammed an elbow into Shaw's ribs. "The bad part of the character-building business is that it's good manners to come in to congratulate a winning coach. But there have been occasions when John has come over to call on me." He nodded. "Good luck to you, son." They moved down the room together.

Dane got his topcoat, shrugged into it and walked down the concrete corridor leading to the outside of the stadium. The guard on the door spoke to him. "Got a message for you, Mr. Dane."

Dipper Dane nodded. "What is it?"

"Miss Whittaker of the *Independent* asks you to wait for her. She said she'd be down shortly. If you don't want to hang around here, her car is in the press section of the parking lot right near the exit lane. You can sit in it. She said you'd know which one."

The man's face was impassive, courteous.

"Thanks," said Dane, and walked away from the stadium toward the parking area. He turned after moving some fifty yards and gazed up at the rim of the stadium. There were lights in the press box; apparently there was still copy being filed, although the huge bowl was now deserted by the crowd, and only various attendants busy at odd jobs remained. Ahead of him, across the common and through the trees vaguely outlined in the dusk he could see the lights of Bakerston and on the edge of town the massed and snakelike lights of cars pouring into the valley *en route* to Iron City along the highway. There were still cars scattered in the parking lot, three or four in the press section as he approached it.

There was a coupé like Sally's near the exit posts. He stopped suddenly, thoughtfully, aware of something he could not define for a moment. Tired, still keyed from the game, and edgy, he paused. He was being watched. The tensions of the day rasping his perceptions heightened the feeling. Playing his hunch, he walked back to the door of the stadium leading to the lockers. The guard was gone, but down the corridor he could hear voices and muted noise. The squad, or much of it, was still around. He waited, standing back in the corridor, away from the door. He stood for five long minutes. The guard did not return, and finally he swung around to go back into the lockers. He took one final look out the door, pushing it ajar as he did so. A small coupé swung out of the press section of the parking lot, moved into the driveway and roared off toward Bakerston. It still looked like Sally's coupé.

He was convinced that it was not.

Chapter Eighteen

Dane walked back into the locker-room. Some of the squad were still in the showers; the rest of the gang were in various stages of dress. He collared a student manager. "Is there a phone around here that connects with the press-box?"

"Sure," answered the kid. "Right in the coaches' office. Ames is in there. You can ask him."

Dane followed the manager's finger, pushed open the door to the small room. Ames was combing his hair. He grinned at Dipper. "Thought you'd gone," he said. "Coming out to the club, or staying on the campus?"

"Staying in," said Dane. "May I use the phone?"

"Sure. For a few hours tonight you guys are heroes, you know." The backfield coach grinned. "In fact, you'll be big shots until Tuesday. Shaw's giving the squad a day off Monday. But help yourself." He walked behind Dane into the locker-room.

Eddie could hear the phone buzz in the press-box. It buzzed for several seconds before a harsh voice replied.

"Miss Whittaker of the *Independent* there?" he asked.

"Wait until I see," said the voice. Dane could hear it yell. There was another long minute of silence, and then Sally's crisp tone filled the receiver.

"Hey," he said, "did you send word down and ask me to wait for you?"

"Is this a left-handed invitation?" she queried. "Or didn't you have the courage to ask me directly? No, I didn't send you any word. I've still got twenty minutes work here. But I can be engaged for the evening if you

ask prettily. What inspired your calling the press-box? Or can I just hope for the best?"

He grinned at her flipness. "I had another idea, but I find change necessary," he said. "How about picking me up, anyhow? I'm starved for both food and your company. I ought to tell you that I'm beat, however. Can we find a quiet nook in the city?"

"Not in that city tonight, pal. But if forced into things, I could be persuaded to cook in. The family will be out again this evening. All I have to do is break a few dates for you. Incidentally, Timmy Watts will be riding back to town with us. I think I ought to tell you that you are a suspicious character to him right now." She paused. "He says he saw you coming out of Hebert's office yesterday, and wondered enough to ask Hebert's secretary what a football player wanted. She told him that there were no football players admitted."

"Thank you," said Dane. "Would you pick me up at the Blue and Gold Hotel downtown here? I've got one or two phone-calls to make first."

"Dipper—" Her voice was soft. "I think you're a strange character too, but I'm glad you called, and I'll hurry. 'By."

He left the coaches' office and entered the locker-room again, crossed its corner and left, walking down the corridor and out into the night. The thing didn't make much sense, he thought, unless somebody was getting worried enough to make a bid for more information, the kind you could slug out of a guy. Or else the opposition suddenly wanted to remove all its known sources of possible danger. Perhaps the timing set up by Connor had gone wrong. This was Saturday night. A story for release in the Sunday papers must have hit the wires around mid-afternoon Saturday, and thus Connor's pressure was already producing results. He walked across the common, moved briskly through the tree-lined streets past Fraternity Row, where the brethren, engaged with cocktails, visiting alumni, game weekend dates and victory were at noisy grips with their celebrations.

The small lobby of the Blue and Gold was crowded, and the three phone booths in its rear corner were filled. Dane waited patiently until one of the young men left the end booth, then stepped in, dialed his number.

He made his report to James at the regional office, described the incident in full. "Wait a minute," said James. "Connor's coming in." Dane could hear the muted cadences of conversation, and then Connor's precise voice was in his ear.

"Where are you now? And what are your plans?"

Dane told him.

"Sounds like somebody's going off the reservation. Our man was at the game this afternoon. Of course, it would have been a nice place to pass instructions along with all that mob, if he's still in a position to pass 'em. But stay where you are fifteen minutes, and I'll put a tail on you. Lord knows, we've ample personnel in the area."

Dane told him Sally's tip about Watts' off-the-cuff investigation at the paper.

"Can't be helped," said Connor. "It doesn't matter now anyhow, as long as there isn't anything definite for him to go on. If I thought he'd get too nosey, I'd have Hebert put a flea in his ear. You can even tell Whittaker when this weekend is over. Watch your step, and we'll stay in touch."

He left the booth, wandered out into the lobby, leaned on the corner of the registration desk and listened to a tall young man in a polo coat harangue the stony-faced hotel clerk, a man who had heard about everything college men could concoct during years of service. "Look, my girl's got this room: she's in it—well, not right this minute, but her things are there. Now, this guy's date has no place to sleep. Something got jammed at his house, and the girls' dorm is filled. Why can't we move his girl in with my girl? You could rig a cot or something, then make out two different bills, one for me and one for him. I'd have my girl okay the arrangement, but she's a bit ticked, and she doesn't like this other girl anyhow. But, hell, we have to do something."

"I'd suggest you all stay up all night. Play games."

"Yeh, but where would we change for breakfast? Try it this way. Let me look at the register and see if I can find some guy I know. I'll get him to come over to the house and bunk with me, and have him give his room to this guy's girl. . . . What do you say?"

Dane never heard the answer. He walked down to the lobby entrance and stood just inside the door; and then Sally's horn, a distinctive hiccoughing beep, was honking in the street. There was no one in the lobby that he knew. He looked at his wrist-watch uncertainly. A bright-looking young man wearing horn-rimmed glasses came through the revolving door, glanced amiably around the lobby and brushed by. "Nice game, Dipper," he said softly. "Beat it." Dane walked out, waved Sally out of the mid-street traffic toward the curb past the hotel. As her car moved to him, he walked around and jammed into it beside Timmy Watts.

"H'ya, Dipper, how do you feel?" Watts asked.

"Beat, Timmy. How's your hired help doing?"

"Why don't you ask her?"

"How are you doing?"

"Some better now."

They rode in a companionable silence for a time, and they chatted easily about the game. Sally pushed the little car along, and less than a half-hour later they were in Iron City. They moved through the traffic, and dropped a suddenly sulky Watts at the paper for a final check on his Sunday editions.

Sally's parents were in the hallway as they entered the house. Mr. Whittaker, a chubby gray-haired man with a rounded and glowing face, was assisting Mrs. Whittaker into her coat. He was having trouble, because he was attempting to hold on to a cocktail glass with one hand. Mrs. Whittaker, a matronly version of Sally herself, smiled at them. "My goodness, it's good to see you. Help me with this coat, Sally. There's a good child. Your father is useless tonight, and we're late now."

"Nonsense," boomed the elder Whittaker. "It's one of those after-game cocktail and buffet things. Nobody there yet except people getting swatted. They won't take the wraps off the food for an hour yet. May I make you people a drink?"

Sally made the introductions; Dane acknowledged them, smiling a bit as Mr. Whittaker winked at him.

"You cannot make them a drink," said Mrs. Whittaker. "You've had two now, and I want to leave." She patted Sally on the cheek. "There may be one for you in the shaker, dear. It will be weak and watery. Are you going out to dinner?"

"Not tonight, Mother. I promised Dipper a handout here. Is there anything around?"

"Tired ham and cold beans," interrupted her father. "I looked while your mother was dressing. Also one dead pork chop, a chunk of rat cheese, tomorrow's rib roast, some dried beef in wax paper and a lot of damn' carrots. Try the deep freeze, Sally. Take the skinniest and worst-looking steaks from the righthand corner. I want the good ones for myself." He grinned at Dane like a small boy bragging over a good report card. "Make yourself a drink, son, if you use it." He turned to Sally. "We'll be at Crawford's. Call me about ten-thirty and tell me the house is burning. I want to get away as soon as possible."

He grabbed a coat from the rack and hastened Mrs. Whittaker to the door. "Good night, daughter. Behave yourself."

They were alone. Sally, her coat still on, reached up and grabbed Dane's ears, pulled his head down and kissed him. He slid his hands inside her open coat, letting them drop to the curve of her hips and drew her to him, held her a long moment. "Why did we fight?" she murmured. "I missed you, missed you." He was silent, and he silenced her with his lips. The tension fled from him, and he released her. She put her hands on his shoulders, looked up at him.

"When they took you off that field this afternoon, I thought I'd die," she said gravely. "I can't stand that feeling about you ever, Eddie. You might as well know I can't stand worrying about you, either." She paused. "In anything you're doing—"

He tapped her upraised chin with a closed hand. "Feed us first, talk about us later." He helped her out of her coat and threw his own on a chair. They walked through the house to the big square old-fashioned kitchen. Sally handed him a pan and a handful of potatoes. "Peel 'em," she commanded. "I'm going to do the same for myself. I've been in these clothes all day, and I want a slight change. Be back in a minute, full of glamour for you."

"You don't even have to go away for that," he said.

"I think I'll keep you." She left him with the potatoes.

PROFESSOR STUART SLANP dined at the Faculty Club with an instructor of German, the faculty advisor of the student language club Germania. They discussed the advisability of merging the Romance Language clubs, separated into units of Spanish, French and Italian, with Germania for bi-monthly meetings in overlapping cultural subjects such as folklore, thus giving all the individual student language groups a homogeneity hitherto denied. Slanp, as always, was precise, thoughtfully courteous and genuinely helpful. He excused himself at eight-thirty, left the club and wandered down the winding campus walk from the graceful stone structure into the town. The brimming vitality of the village annoyed him. It was more crowded than usual, and noisier. He was well aware that the weekend of the Catholic game was a traditional party weekend, and that victory added a heightened emotional fillip to the festivities. He wished that he had not attended the game. While it was not a serious deviation in his habits, the mob excitement created by a stadium full of fanatics was a tiring experience.

He would not admit to the feeling of bolstered security he obtained from watching the man Dane, a person exposed while he himself remained hidden. It would be weakness to admit that what he could see he could not fear. To do so, would be to admit that he was worried about what he sensed but could not see. Such doubts were a part of the inevitable isolation in the work.

It had been more than a full month since he had last functioned as a unit within the regional structure, and then merely to brief an accredited person on a personality background necessary to work in another area. It was a minor chore, not to be compared to the former transmission of data supplied by the elder Rogalski until his termination of usefulness. But then, Slanp's services were necessarily limited, his talents specialized, more in a vital stand-by category than an active, organizational duty bracket.

The group in Iron City existed for a different purpose than his. That operated at worker-and-community level, and as far as he was personally concerned, was merely a single telephone number, a single innocuous residential address useful to him only in an emergency or by direct order. He wondered at the reaction of the Iron City group with the influx of Federal agents concerned with game tickets. If the guilty flee when no man pursueth, how does the guilty run when the pursuers swarm the premises? But then, those who admit to no guilt seldom run, and those with such outmoded personal equipment as a guilt complex seldom become important cogs in party affairs.

It was the perennial uncertainty. . . . Dane, for instance—no one had ever identified Dane as an opponent, a hazard, a man committed against him. It was simply a cold analysis of coincidence that limned the man as a hazard; his background and service record, his appearance at a time of stress within the work and the disappearance of the elder Rogalski, his interest in the removal of the younger Rogalski as evidenced by the news story of his picture search. That photograph had never been sent to the Rogalski family, that poor mine country couple. Simple checking revealed as much. Where, then, did Dane fit in, and why was he so sure of his position? A football player! But then, he himself was a professor.

Very seldom did black show black or white white. A man in his position had to force the disclosures necessary to his career upon occasion, and always risk went with the attempt. Twice now he had acted, once with young Rogalski, again today with a try for Dane and a gamble for information. Twice, now, he had stepped out of his hitherto silent niche to use emergency mechanism, and in the latter move the area was flooded with Federal agents. In some quarters that might not be considered good judgment.

Actually all he had done was make a telephone call from the crowded men's room under the stadium just before halftime, using the dial phone as one in a line of impatient people, each eager to drop a nickel after him. The method was practically untraceable. He would get word concerning the attempt for information later if it succeeded.

Slanp, walking slowly, swung into the Blue and Gold hotel, picked up the local Sunday newspaper, which generally reached Bakerston from Iron City about eight in the evening. He would have the New York *Times* delivered to his apartment in the morning. He had the winter issue of the *Cornhill,* a British literary quarterly, at home. It contained a Pope-Hennessy article on the saint legends of Provence that he wanted to read.

There was a thin, cold wind in the treetops as he walked down the dark side-street to his apartment, and it rattled the dead ends of branches.

Not until the fifth day were they permitted to stand beside him for a moment.

There was magic in the night, a freshness in the wind —a hint of subtle scents and signs. But he felt no exhilaration. Never in his life had he run for the running, wrestled, thrown a ball or felt any impelling urge for simple animal antics. The physical restlessness in such a night merely emphasized his fatigue, and at the same time stimulated his mind, sending it probing in circles.

His apartment was warm. He hung his coat carefully on a hanger in the closet at the entrance, pulled the chain switch on a lamp on a long library table. He walked back to his bedroom, where he swapped shoes for slippers, removed his necktie, exchanged his suit coat for a faded maroon smoking jacket. He returned to his living-room, picked up the Sunday *Independent,* and slacked into a deep brown leather easy chair.

An eight-column banner line across the top of the first news section highlighted the big story of the area: "CENTRAL DUMPS CATHOLIC BY 14-7 COUNT." He looked twice at the head and the bank of the lead story, a premonition urging him to ignore the relentless type: EX-RED COURIER REVEALS WASHINGTON ESPIONAGE RING; MICROFILM EVIDENCE IN HANDS OF COMMITTEE; FBI-JUSTICE DEPT. PROBE UNDER WAY.

He read the story carefully, turned to the jump page where the marching column of type was continued. There was another blur of headline adjoining the continuation: FEDERAL AGENTS TRACE SPY LEAD TO IRON CITY-BAKERSTON AREA.

It was foolish, ridiculous, and he felt deeply ashamed. He went into his bathroom and was sick, his stomach shocked with an alien nervous rebellion. Shaken, and still more tired, he returned to his chair, gave his intelligence a chance to recoup his emotional balance.

Chapter Nineteen

DANE ROLLED OUT OF BED AT EIGHT-THIRTY. He was stiff, and there was an angry purple bruise on his left thigh. He walked into his small bathroom, swabbed carelessly at his white teeth with a badly frayed toothbrush and then took a shower. The hot water felt fine. He rubbed briskly with a towel, then padded into his room and dressed, slid into a pullover parka and left the house.

It was Sunday; the air was full of an indefinable aimless leisure, and the sonorous bells from the campus chapel half a mile away. He walked smartly, pulling the thin, winey air into his lungs with satisfaction. He walked down into Bakerston's Main Street, across it to the lobby of the Blue and Gold, and bought the Sunday *Independent.* He left, turned a corner back to the Main Street and strode down to the diner. It was crowded, and it smelled of coffee, bacon and cigarette smoke. It was noisy, too, with a cheerful clamor of young voices, boys and girls in varying degrees of alertness from the previous night's campus parties, and all of them hungry.

Dipper found a counter stool, perched upon it and ordered orange juice, oatmeal, a double order of bacon, toast and coffee. He put his folded newspaper at his feet, jammed between the stool base and the bottom counter rail. He was finishing his coffee when he felt a hand bang his shoulder.

It belonged to Peterson. The big center was grinning. "Just our meat," he said. "We've been looking for you. Perkins, Zibby, Piskoti and I are going over to the city to see Ike's wife and kid. Pay the man and give me a half buck—we're passing the hat for gas this morning, because I'm broke."

"Didn't you go out to the club with the gang after the game?" asked Dane, waving at the counterman.

"Perk, Zibby and I did. We can't keep up with you athletes. Piskoti's girl was down for the weekend. She's staying sacked and catching an eleven church service. He's gonna pick her up afterward. We'll be back by noon, if we get rolling now."

They moved out to the street. Peterson's mammoth Pierce-Arrow was a block away and vacant. He leaned over the wheel and pushed down on the horn, releasing a blast. "That's to let 'em know I'm back with you," he explained. "The rest of the guys are looking the hotel over." They were coming around the corner as he spoke, and were yelling at Dane when still fifty feet away.

"I've got to stop by the room first," said Dane to Peterson. "Want to shuck the parka and pick up a few things. Hey, we ought to take some flowers or something."

He repeated the proposal to Ziborsky, Piskoti and Perkins. They nodded sagely. "We'll get 'em in Iron City. Let's go."

THEY piled into the car, and Peterson pulled it away from the curb and drove to the Pennypacker house, where Dane got out and ran for his room. He took his paper with him, opened it on his bed and scanned the headlines while he knotted a tie and traded parka for sports-coat and topcoat. He picked the paper up and read the spy story avidly; then he threw it on the bed again and went out. He would check with the office in Iron City when he got to the hospital. He felt a grim resolve harden within him. The end was in sight.

Municipal Hospital, on a hill overlooking Iron City, was a huge square building, its granite exterior a smudged and soot-darkened gray. It was overheated, hushed and smelled of antiseptic. The white-clad attendant at the information desk in the lobby gave them instructions on how to locate the maternity wards, and they walked off down a seemingly interminable corridor, placing their feet lightly in that gait characteristic of most healthy hospital visitors, as if the floors were explosive.

They found the Bergs in a long ward on the south side of the building. There were approximately twenty-five other maternity patients in the same common dormitory, each bed bristling with a privacy tenuously achieved by a white standing screen which served as a representative if non-concealing wall. Inasmuch as it was a visitors' period, the screens stood like sails on regatta day from one end of the ward to the other, more to sustain the dignity of fathers than for any other reason. The women banished them, to gossip, as soon as their men left and the ward returned to its true female function.

Ike's face broke into broad smile when he saw them. He still wore a lumpish souvenir of the game along his left cheek, and the grin crinkled around it to run slantwise for his temple. He leaned over, said something to Florence before he rose from his straight chair at the bedside. They clustered around the bed, and Perkins handed the flowers to Ike, who waved them mawkishly beneath Florence's nose before he laid them on a small night table.

"You guys are just in time to see the kid," said Ike. "They'll throw us out while he eats, but we can see him when they trot him in here. He's terrific. Big shoulders, even some hair, and handsome like me."

Florence smiled at him from the pillow and shook her head. Dane winked at her. Perkins pulled a wry mouth and said: "Looks like you? The poor little kid! You better hope that he looks like your wife."

A nurse just about tall enough to fit under Peterson's arm crowded up to the bed, juggling a container of boric-acid solution and absorbent cotton swabs. "What is this," she asked pertly, "a wrestlers' convention? Beat it, gentlemen. It's time to get nursing mothers ready for their primary function. You can wait down by the nursery and see the baby when he goes by. Take one glance each, and don't breathe on him." She began to slip Florence's bedjacket off a shoulder as she spoke.

Ike, blushing faintly, shoved them toward the door.

Perkins linked an arm within Ike's, and with a perfectly composed face, asked: "What do they do with those swabs, Ike?"

"All right," grunted Ike. "From my friends I take a beating. Motherhood is no longer sacred. You think a bunch of dead weeds squares everything. The way I get it, they sterilize the faucets with 'em."

"Berg," grinned Ziborsky, "you're a great man."

They walked down the corridor toward an expanse of plate-glass window which offered a view of the nursery, where they joined an already assembled knot of new fathers and visiting relatives. Masked nurses were scooping infants out of cribs, wrapping them in blankets and tucking the blankets high about infant heads for the parade to their mothers. "Kind of like a zoo cage, isn't it?" said Peterson idly. The outrage in Ike's eyes and the undisguised anger in the glances of other observers, all of whom enjoyed a stake in the proceedings unknown to a brash young bachelor, sent his words into an embarrassed mumble. Dane laughed, took some of the cold stares for his humor.

"There's mine," said Ike, driving an elbow into Perkins' ribs, and pointing to a far corner of the nursery, where a nurse was lifting a baby from a crib, the foot of which was slightly tilted above level. They craned to see, forming a bulky wall against the glass, and thus creating an audible pond of irritated mumbles in the corridor behind them.

"What do they have your kid on his back for? Why's that basket slanted up that way?" asked Peterson.

"My kid likes it that way, I guess," said Ike. "Look."

The nurse brought the baby up to the glass window, showed him slowly down the rapt line, and then handed him to the small nurse who had chased them away from the bed.

They had no words for the sight or for the hallowed expression on Ike's face as he looked at them for comment. Ziborsky moved his hands as if trying to summon words. "He's a fine-looking fellow," said Dane gravely. "Going to be a big one." The rest of them nodded vigorously in agreement, and they all offered their hands to Ike, who shook each of them with a quick, nervous pressure. He walked to the hospital door with them. "See you guys. Thanks for coming in."

A hundred yards from the entrance on their way to the car Perkins spoke. "Damn it, what can you say about a baby?"

On their way back to Bakerston they dropped Dane off and he walked some blocks to the Baker Building, a typical ten-story office structure housing a bank office on the first floor. He walked into the deserted office entrance, pushed the elevator button and waited until the watchman, doubling as operator during the Sunday lull, stuck his head around the short corridor corner. The watchman, a grizzled character wearing a rusty black suit and a white paper collar, carried a noteboard which he asked Dane to sign. The car rose to the eighth floor, and Dane listened to the cables hum.

The offices of Agent-in-Charge James might have been those of any lawyer, broker, insurance firm or friendly loan firm. They were crisp, impersonal and standard with file cabinets, desks and typewriters. In James' private office, however, a bank of teletype machines filled one whole wall. They were chattering when Dane walked through the two outside rooms into it, and James was standing over one of them, reading a message.

He turned as Dane entered. "H'ya, Dipper," he said. "Figured you'd be in about now. Connor's on his way down too. He's bringing John Shaw; the guy's been in from the beginning on this end, and he might as well get the windup." He tore off the teletype sheet, walked over to his desk with it. "You might be interested to know that our check on some of these front organizations in the city, while it didn't produce anything startling, turned up a couple of chores for the immigration people—five false entries so far. It looks as though all of those volunteer citizens will be going abroad again." He lighted a cigarette. "Incidentally, you were clean as a whistle last night after that experience at the stadium. Our man Jeevers reports that you left Whittakers' at a respectable hour, rode circumspectly back to the campus and went to bed without any attention. You figure somebody lost his nerve? Or maybe you had a mistaken idea?"

"Can't figure it," said Eddie. "Don't get it at all. I had a hunch and checked it. Sally hadn't called me. The attendant on the locker-room gate—well, I wasn't going to look him up afterward, even if I could have found him."

"We did," grunted James. "He's the regular man there, and he lives right in Bakerston. All he says is that a boy, a college kid, gave him the message to give to you. Could be; and if not, we still don't have anything." He looked over Dane's shoulder at Shaw bulking large in the doorway. Connor followed the big man in, reaching out to flip a vacant chair up beside Dane's. James indicated another along the wall for Shaw.

"How do you feel, Dipper?" asked the coach, looking at Dane sharply. "Sore after yesterday? Stiff?"

"Some tender," said Dane. "A few bumps and bangs. How's the rest of the gang?"

"Sent Thomas to the dentist right from the showers last night. Armbruster may have a shoulder separation. Daniels has a sore spot that might be a cracked rib. But all in all, things are right good after a game like that one. Old Ducky told me that he's got a crop of ailments too. His squad made the eleven o'clock out this morning. Boy, I'm glad to get by that one."

Connor waited until he finished, the characteristic tired twist at the corners of his mouth. "Everything's set for tomorrow," he said softly. He stared speculatively at Shaw. "The Central man involved is Professor Stuart Slanp. Know him?"

The big man grunted, his face impassive. "Met him a few times. His reputation's fine around here; and as far as I recall, he's known as an outstanding man in many other places."

Connor shrugged his lean shoulders, hunched deeper into the chair. "He still is," he said wearily. "But he's definitely implicated in the data gathered on the Washington end, and from the way it appears now, he'll be explaining a great many things for a long time on past performances. Frankly, he's done as far as his reputation goes right now, and I'm reasonably convinced that he's the man we wanted in the present case. Whether we ever prove that or not, he's going to Washington to testify before an investigating committee, with at least three Federal agencies interested in his activities."

James rattled a pencil idly, interrupted: "He hasn't left his apartment since last night, except to pick up the newspapers delivered this morning. He has made no phone calls, has had no personal contact with anyone outside the house that we know about. I might add that he has done nothing unusual for him so far. He usually takes a walk about four in the afternoon, and customarily dines out Sunday evening either as a guest somewhere in Bakerston or at the Faculty Club. We will get later reports as to whether or not he follows his routines."

"He'll probably sit tight and go right through to a final dismissal of all possible charges," said Shaw. "In a way, I'd still rather see that than a whirlwind of charges, indictments, and whatever excitement goes with these things bouncing around the campus."

"Shaw," said Connor, leaning forward, "there comes a place where that quality known as the benefit of the doubt is riskier than an out-and-out error. The man is tarred. We didn't smirch him. A past associate, and a

damn' guilty associate, did. We traced the transmission of vital atomic data to this campus, and although we have never found its terminal point here, in any provable sense, we don't have to be hit on the head to know that where we have a party member, and apparently an important party worker in the past, we certainly have something more than a suspect in the usual meaning of the word."

There was a long pause before Dane broke it.

"As I get it, I'll make the pickup about eleven in the morning, with Mr. James standing by. I'll bring Slanp down here to make any statement he cares to issue, and Mr. James will then see that he gets a trip to Washington."

"You'll have our warrant and a subpœna from the Congressional committee, but I doubt if you need them," said Connor. "I still bet he cracks." He traded glances with James. "You will also take a .38."

Dane rose leisurely. "Okay if I break it up?"

"Your coach has asked us out to dinner," said Connors.

Shaw grinned at Dane. "Sally's coming too. My wife's idea. It seems that the girls have been talking about you. I've also got the pictures of the game. We might do a little work."

The chatter of the teletype along James' wall stuttered through the room. He nodded at them, rising as he did so. "Some of us might," he grinned.

Chapter Twenty

THE PILLS HAD NOT WORKED TO BRING STUART Slanp real rest. His sleep had been more a gray, numbing fog than the restoring oblivion he had hoped for when he took them. He was grateful for the church bells clanging into the Sunday stillness, for the sound probed his restless torpor and pushed him into a full awakening. With it came a controlled calm. The chase was up, and he would adapt to it. But still, the ragged thoughts of last night persisted. Destruction was a form of total adaptability too, with the destroyed seldom in a position to enjoy the versatility of matter. He remembered the old parlor games he had once played with such sophist ingenuity. Is there sound if there are no ears to hear it? At what point does a chicken eaten by a fox stop clucking and begin to bark? At what stage does a fox consumed by a bear lose its cunning and become part of an ursine stupidity?

He shook his head to banish the arrant nonsense. A man of sedentary habit jarred from such a rôle and forced to ape the part of the harried should gain strength, new stimulation as his instincts of self-preservation sharpened in actual use.

He rose and went into his bathroom, took his shower, and shaved. He dressed carefully, but not until he tied the necktie he thought proper to a gray flannel lounge suit, did he accept the fact that he was attempting to postpone a decision. And with that realization he realized also that somewhere along the line of forces allied with his life, a decision had already been made over which he could have no control. He did not need to re-read the news story to refresh his memory of the central figure mentioned in it. He knew the confessed man, had known his work, and could judge the validity of the evidence he had submitted to the Federal authorities. He was in deeply. Still, there was justification for some forms of that implication. It had been a long time ago. But how much was known or guessed of his more recent activities? It was safe to assume very little. Otherwise he would have been confronted by the direct action of the law. That was simple logic, and it gave him a measure of confidence.

He walked through his apartment to the kitchen. The New York *Times* had been delivered by now, he thought. It would be an admission of weakness to get it, turn through its news columns. Haste solved no problems.

Never a handy man about a kitchen, he boiled water to make instant coffee. That was an easy enough thing to do. It was equally simple to boil two eggs for his breakfast, to pour a glass of prepared orange juice which came in a bottle from the same dairy service that delivered his daily quart of milk. He put his food on a table, sat before it and ate slowly, disregarding a tendency of his throat to close as he swallowed. He even poured a second cup of coffee. Then he went to his apartment door, took the *Times* from a rack over his letter box.

The story was there, on page one in New York as, doubtless, in other cities throughout the nation. There was no elaboration on the essential facts he had absorbed in the *Independent*, although his heart raced at the condensation of the *Independent* supporting story which the *Times* included as a mere line stating that it was believed Federal investigation was under way at Central University.

Incongruously he resented the mention of the University in such a connection. It seemed to be an accusation against learning, a slur on scholarship. He saw nothing strange in his heat, nothing odd in the fact that he knew, better than most, how truly untainted the nation's academic institutions were as far as organized disaffection went.

He rose from his chair, walked to a window and examined the day. For the first time, inasmuch as he was involved in a personal struggle, he saw the campus as a place of struggle, a microcosm, perhaps of global conflict. Here, as elsewhere, the people who knew what they wanted moved steadily over, around and past those who comfortably, and without knowing, enjoyed a way of life they refused to envision as temporary, an existence to which they personally made no contribution, and in which they saw little need for immediate striving.

There had long been a streak in him clamoring to play God, and up to now a beneficent ignorance that had nothing to do with his intellectual or academic attainment, which prevented him from seeing a simple lack of equipment for such a job. Not for years had he contemplated failure as a possible individual experience; nor had he perceived the basic seeds of failure in the future of the philosophy which had led him to betray his land.

He contemplated failure now. Exposure! And that, in the work, was failure, unadorned, whether or not legal punishment accompanied it. Enlightenment, when it comes, comes speedily. What his mind had refused to accept as such last night, his nervous system reacted upon automatically in nausea, shock. Now, with both mind and body joined in viewing the facts, he reached the edge of panic.

Panic, controlled, is not panic, and from long studious habit he left the window, where for the past few minutes he had gazed unseeing, and returned to a chair by his long library table. He took a yellow pad and a pencil, let a common friendly doodling marshal his thoughts.

WHAT was the worst that could happen? He had few illusions in this moment of hard reality. He could be punished by the party, and the method would be removal, complete obliteration by bullet, knife or arranged accident. He could be taken, tried, convicted by the Government, and at the very worst, during peacetime, go to jail still possessed of a physical life.

He doubted the eventuality of such a "worst." Government was still a groping, nebulously managed thing in such cases. It still fell over its own feet attempting to give justice to those whose concepts of such an intangibility scorned that justice while it accepted its benefits. He was a well-informed man. There was a trial in New York which promised to be a "five-year plan" for the ac-

cused, and where more influential party leadership than his might ultimately wind up scatheless. What then? There was no proof of his actual criminality either in espionage, or the removal of young Rogalski.

The answer lay in his monstrous pride, in the outward respect, honor and ostensible achievement he had bartered integrity to obtain, and without which he would be no more than an individual derelict moving among men who would scorn him. There would be no pleasant doors open to him. At best, there might be a life under an alias. . . .

The day passed for him on the rack of imagination. He made more coffee for his lunch, ignored the pile of student papers he had intended to go over. He fleetingly debated whether or not to take his customary Sunday afternoon walk and decided against it. He did not want to stroll in the sunshine, with the hills aflame in the crisp blazing autumn day which, in the climate of the region, might be the last fine one before real winter battered the campus. It would take the maximum of his will to drive him out to dinner, into possible discussion of some of the events he pondered, or even worse, the rattling faculty enthusiasm he might hear about the football victory over Catholic.

He did not know exactly when the resentment he cherished focused upon Dipper Dane as a tangible source of his trouble, and the one single personality standing clear against the jumbled background of a situation. A man could be his own persecutor just so long before he had to find an object of transference. If no enemy could be found, the representation of a foe would do, and with it an easing of self-hatred.

Dane was all the things he was not; and while not the cause of the things he was, it was Dane, the symbol, he must face. Arriving at this conclusion, he refused to think further. He rose, cleaned and tidied himself up, and taking a coat, left his apartment for dinner.

Chapter Twenty-one

"How do I look?" Dane grinned at Jason James. The quality of his smile brought an answering grimace from the older man. He had on a neat blue cheviot suit, a white shirt and a subdued necktie. He looked like a successful young business man, and if his suit coat seemed cut a bit loosely at the armpits, it at least concealed the slight bulge of the holster at his left shoulder.

"You're not going to a wedding," said James. "But I'm glad you're not rigged like a college boy for the job. Come on, get in the car, and we'll go on over and get through with this."

Dane picked up a topcoat and they left his room. James' unobtrusive sedan was parked at the curb.

He felt tense, and concealed it as best he could from the sharp scrutiny of the older man. The slight stiffness at his shoulders might be the results of Saturday's game, but he suspected that it might also be from the awareness of the gun beneath his coat. The thing was about ended for him. No matter what happened from here on out, the pattern of life, his life, had changed again. He forced his mind to more pleasant things.

They had had a fine dinner at John Shaw's; deep-freeze venison from one of the coach's hunting trips, which, according to the smiling Molly, appeared only for births, weddings, significant victories or whatever the big man considered major occasions. Shaw, Molly, Connor and Sally and himself; the normal coaching-staff party had been given a raincheck. The big man and his staff would work game pictures today, although he sensed that John Shaw would not be keeping his mind on the game until he heard from Dane when the day ended.

It had been a good evening, and in a way, a surprising one. Shaw had shown them the recent game films after dinner, amid much banter. He had argued with Sally on several individual plays, slowed the film down to explain their strategy to her, and ribbed her on one of them which caught Dane in a missed blocking assignment. Connor had sat relaxed, sipping Shaw's after-dinner brandy, enjoying the game all over again. When Shaw had put the game away, Connor had gazed at them speculatively, and had exchanged a questioning glance with the big man.

"Go ahead," said Shaw in answer to that querying look.

The Government man had then carefully and in a soft, yet incisive voice explained as much as he thought necessary of the case that had brought both him and Dane to Central. Dane, thinking about it as James skirted the campus for the other side of Bakerston, realized that Connor had been at some pains to be informative. He had outlined Shaw's rôle, commending it with emphasis in a manner which brought a tender smile of pride to Molly's face. He had described Dane's past service with a wry monotone, made his present assignment appear the dullest of routine, which, Dane completely agreed, it was. He made clear that the future was in Dane's own hands.

It was, at this point, that Sally had risen from her chair, walked to Dane and kissed him warmly before them all, a radiance in her face that had sent Shaw and Connor into an embarrassed squirm.

"This," said Dane sheepishly, "is a helluva way to announce an engagement." They had laughed at him; but Connor's dry, firm handclasp and Shaw's heavy arm flung across his shoulders had belied the laughter, as had the tears that shone in Molly's eyes when Sally embraced her.

It had been a good evening. Shaw, drifting into football shop talk, outlined the forthcoming game with Eastern in New York's Polo Grounds. It would be another tough one, he had said, grinning wryly as Connor reminded him that he had never heard comment on an easy one.

Sally had gone home alone. Connor had returned to Dane's room with him, where they had gone over the setup again, with Connor gravely outlining final instructions.

"We want it quiet," he had emphasized. "No fuss, no feathers. Quiet as you can keep it. And remember—well, don't take any chances on anything."

James' voice stabbed into his thoughts. "Almost there," he said. "Make it a routine call. You've got a warrant and a subpœna, but I suppose the old badge will do. You'll go up alone. It's a first-floor apartment. You know the layout. I'll give you about five minutes, and then join you, if necessary.

"Everything you'll see on the street will be ours. There's a bread truck about fifty yards away, and a tailor-shop delivery pickup on the other side about the same distance. Maybe it's all too elaborate, but better safe than sorry.

"The guy's there. He has no Monday morning classes, anyhow. He got back last evening right after dinner and hasn't stirred out since." He eased the car to a stop. "We'll get out here and walk a block."

Dane's legs felt wooden, and he stamped his feet once or twice as he got out of the car. "Suppose the guy doesn't choose to open up when I knock?"

"Christmas!" snapped James. "Almost forgot." He reached into his pocket. "It's a Yale model. We took the serial number and had a key duplicated. Here it it. But I doubt if you need it."

Keep it routine, thought Dane, the old business touch, the plain, ordinary departmental pattern. Was any pickup ever routine? He knew of no one on an actual

job that ever considered it so, even the veterans like Connor, like James, like any of the other men he had been associated with on previous assignments.

So often the actual arrest meant *finis* for the case of the agent concerned. It marked a finality. Whatever continuity existed in a case following an arrest was a thing for departmental lawyers, courts, other legalistic channels and, upon occasion, funeral directors.

THE house, like most of Bakerston's converted old structures, was set back from the sidewalk and fronted by a sweep of lawn which at one time had been studded with iron dogs, wrought-metal benches and coy garden plots. Dane turned into the walk with James a half-stride behind him. He entered the vestibule, walked past Slanp's mail rack to a door at the left of the corridor. James remained on the porch behind him.

The button to the right of Slanp's heavy walnut door was mother of pearl, and Dane pressed it, holding his thumb upon it a full second. He could hear the buzz within the apartment, faint yet insistent. There was on other sound. He pressed the button again. This time the buzz was followed by footfalls, and Professor Slanp opened the door.

The sun streaming in the windows of the apartment did not reach the doorway, and in the dim half-light, made dimmer by the brightness behind it, Slanp's face, above his impeccable white collar, was pale with a translucent quality. It held a thin glowing appearance like a face in a church window.

The man smiled faintly.

"Mr. Dane," he said courteously; "won't you come in?"

Dane nodded gravely. "Thank you." He followed the man into the book-lined living-room, watched Slanp walk around the long table and sit down. "I regret, Mr. Slanp," he said, "that this is not a social call. I have a warrant for your arrest." He stretched his hand halfway across the table, and the small gold badge in his palm burned brightly as the sun struck it. "You will be given an opportunity to make a statement in Iron City. Meanwhile, I extend the customary warning concerning anything you might say."

"You are not exactly unexpected, Mr. Dane." The faint, well-mannered smile was still at the corners of the pale face, and there was a relaxed sense of ease in the way he rose. "This isn't my customary way of beginning a week," he added with unexpected humor. "May I get my coat?"

There was a charm in the man, thought Dane, and despite his alertness, he felt a touch of sympathy for the neat, slim figure before him. The man was playing the string out gracefully, a course, which knowing the background of the case as Dane did, might ultimately win him free.

"You don't mind if I help you on with your coat?" queried Dane, moving into the middle of the room. "Or perhaps help you locate it?"

"Standard procedure while confronting suspected criminals, Mr. Dane?"

"Standard procedure."

It was the polite casualness of the situation, the almost tea-party atmosphere that impressed Dane in spite of himself. He knew, that James, by this time, was outside the apartment door, waiting, perhaps hearing only the shreds of modulated voices.

"I assume the press will be present in Iron City, Mr. Dane?" asked Slanp at the entrance to his bedroom.

"I'd be inclined to doubt it," said Dane shortly. "That sort of thing will be handled through official channels. I don't like to be rude, but hurry it up." He watched Slanp's eyebrows raise at the curtness in the words.

There was a gentle sarcasm in Slanp's reply. "Hurry? Of course, it's just that I am not used to being arrested. It would be silly to ask the charge?"

Dane was blunt. It was the patronizing attitude that marked this meeting, and not what he had had every right to mistake for good manners. The man was playing a part, seeing himself as he thought he should be seen, and managing, at the same time, to maintain his aloof, accustomed relationship between student and instructor, that of the guided to the mentor.

"Espionage," he said. "Conspiracy against the United States, treason, and"—Dane hesitated briefly—"possibly murder."

Slanp's face took a deeper pallor, the cheekbones suddenly pronounced. There was a momentary glitter in his eyes. Dane had seen faces like that before, but the men wearing them had been in uniform and there had been a grinding, banging rumble overhead as if a giant had been shredding locomotives. The impression was fleeting. Slanp's ascetic, controlled features again wore the slight smile.

"The charge is impressive," he said, and slid his hand gently into the pocket of his casually fitted coat.

Dane spun with the almost unobtrusive action, thinking with the liquid, flashing motion that the movement was dramatic, unnecessary. He was late. Slanp's pocket was smoking, and through a suddenly charred hole there was a winking flame. Oddly enough, he never heard the report of the gun. He felt only the smashing blow across his chest, turning him farther into the spin than his own muscular impetus. This despite warnings and experience. Then in the numbing shock before the pain and before the darkness, he walked forward, into the gun, forgetful of the weight in his shoulder holster, with his hands reaching for the man, with an unyielding purpose graving his face into a stone mask.

He never saw the second shot fly wide into the bookshelves, tearing a ragged hole in a copy of "Federal Prose: How to Write in and/for Washington." His hands were still reaching, reaching, his will driving a superb body now beyond coördinated control.

He never saw Slanp, shivering, his figure one inhumanly queer, involuntary shudder, withdraw the gun from his pocket, place its muzzle in his mouth, and blow the back of his head into a red-gray smear against the frame of the bedroom door.

JAMES did. Blasting the lock from the outer door with a slug from a .38, he was in time to see Slanp topple. He bent over Dane quickly, and then he was at the telephone. . . .

John Shaw did not make the trip into New York for the game with Eastern. He was too busy, closeted during the day with University officialdom and Federal authorities, and waiting, during the early evening hours at Iron City's Municipal Hospital, for reports on Dane's condition. He was not too busy to address the squad on its morning of departure under Morgan's guidance. The story was smashing from one end of the country to another, anyhow. It made little difference in his patient, simple, yet curiously stirring explanation of its background to the team.

Not in all his years of coaching, however, had he experienced such a squad reaction. There was a complete and stony silence when he finished. The men waited momentarily to see if there was more, then quietly rose to their feet and got in the buses for the ride to the station.

From the platform, Shaw watched the train leave. When it was out of sight, he smiled grimly.

He repeated the same sort of an expression Saturday in the small hospital anteroom where he sat with a drawn-lipped Sally and the patient, thin-mouthed Connor. Dane had passed the crisis stage, and with care and several weeks of hospitalization, would recover. A small portable radio was describing the cold, efficient rout of a good Eastern team by what the announcer termed the

"machine men" of Central. The score was forty to nothing at the end of the third quarter, and Morgan had emptied the bench several times. The reaction to the story of Dipper Dane had worn a delayed fuse.

Chapter Twenty-two

FOR THREE DAYS DANE LIVED IN A DIM shadowland where thick, roiling fogs blanked thought, and only the stabbing, hot lightnings across his chest foretold some horizon beyond the darkness which engulfed him. Slanp's bullet had entered beneath his armpit as he whirled, nicking the top of a lung and tearing a diagonal path across his chest and out near the collarbone of his opposite shoulder. He had bled profusely, a condition which a series of transfusions finally corrected. His first conscious thoughts, beyond the framed expressions of a will to live, were those of chagrin, an awareness of ineptitude; and they were followed by the sick-weak fear that somehow his failure would make a difference to Sally. Although the stirrings of doubt were the feeble evidence of returning strength, they sent his temperature rocketing, keeping nurses and doctors at his bedside.

Not until the fifth day, when Sally, Connor and Shaw were permitted to stand beside him for a brief minute, did his illogical worry abate. The yearning concern in Sally's eyes, the grave pride in John Shaw's, did as much as Connor's curt words, "Well done. It's over," which he used to cover his sentimental relief at Dane's condition.

From there on in, a trained, physically hardened young body did its job.

It was another ten days before they propped Dane in a semi-seated position within the adjustable bed where he sat and listened to Connor, an ex-boss with his bags packed on his way out of the area.

"Don't worry about a thing," said Connor. "You're staying on active duty until you're completely back on your feet, and the tab for your leisure is on the man with the big whiskers. I wouldn't be surprised if there weren't a few other chores available when you're fit again. . . . No, not with us. But that guy Hebert, who runs the *Independent,* has an idea concerning you.

"As far as the case goes—well, where do they ever go? The thing goes on and on. Plug one rathole today, and you've got ten more tomorrow. The hell of it is that there's never anything definite, never anything clearly resolved, never a thing you're sure of. Only, once in a blue moon, whether you can prove anything or not, there's a little glimmer of satisfaction. The work piles up." Connor rose, took Dane's limp hand and squeezed it. "So long, kid. It's been nice handling you, and you'll never know how much it means to have you come through. You'll be hearing from us."

Dane's smile was unconvincing but it was a smile, and it brought the faintest of all tremors to Connor's thin lips as he walked out of the room.

There it goes, thought Dane, his eyes on the man's retreating back. There it goes—until the next time.

Sally and Shaw were daily visitors, but not until another full week had passed, the third since Dane's admission to the hospital, were members of the squad admitted. Berg, Piskoti, Ziborsky, Peterson and Daniels formed the first delegation, and they hadn't been in the room ten minutes when Perkins stormed in, caustically demanding to know why they hadn't waited for him. Not even Shaw's reports of squad progress could match the chatter they brought with them.

The team had slugged through the Austin game, dumping a good club from the Southwest by ten points. It had entertained Whitman, a team from the Coast, and beaten it by twenty. "We ain't losing any this year," explained Berg, dropping a sheaf of candid-camera shots of his new baby on Dane's bed. "We can't," said the practical Perkins gleefully. "We figure all the publicity that's been breaking around and about this autumn, most of it due to you and the general state of the nation, has upped our pro prices about one full third." He was flip. "There seems to be a bit of old college try seeping into things too," he added, "Also due to you and your sterling efforts. Naturally, this condition will change about the time you're ready to join us in the Rose Bowl —" Berg's elbow interrupted him. "How you do babble, Perky," said the big guard. "Dane's gotta have rest, and that blat's enough to drive him nuts."

They made a solid phalanx around the bed, and Dane could do no more than grin at them. "The whole thing's had some funny results," said Peterson gravely. "The University has taken a helluva ride. Maybe Shaw told you. But after the first general yapping died down, we ran into a lot of jokers on some of these clubs. Some Texas jerk on that Austin club—you know how the chatter goes when the big wrassle's on—called us Central's Red Army, and it didn't go so good. We trompled him some, and they yanked him. That's what fancy mouth here means about not dropping any for a while. We can't. At least, we aren't going to."

"When do you think you'll blow out of here?" asked Ziborsky. "Or are you still full of tunnels?"

They waited for his answer. "Don't know, but soon. Other people need hospital room, they tell me. John Shaw's going to let me bunk at his house for a week or so until they make sure nothing silly's happening to me. I won't make any letter this year, though." He pursed his lips at them. "You guys play too rough."

They jeered him. A minute or two later an irate doctor and two imperious nurses put them brusquely out of the room.

Berg returned alone, his dark features queerly intent. He put his hand over Dane's, his swarthy paw dwarfing the pale bony hand on the counterpane, and looked down at Dane's questioning face.

"Listen, kid," he said softly. "Things are some different for me and Florence than for most folks you know real well, and you know what I mean. We think we're as good Americans as they come, but I'm a Jew-boy too, Dipper. I got a new kid. Call this corny, if you want to, but I'd just like to say thanks for everything. See you."

For a long time after Berg had gone, Dane lay quietly thinking; maybe that's all there was, decent people against those who weren't. Hardly a new philosophy, or an original thought—but one a man could tie to, and a simple, understandable thing. He fell asleep, into a deep, untroubled, restoring slumber, the gnawing, constant ache in his chest curiously lightened.

He told Sally of Berg's comment the next day, and she bent over and kissed him like a mother caressing a not-quite-bright child.

NOT until the week of the State game was Dane removed from the hospital. The gang had marched through Belmont in the conference and past Marston; but if Central remained undefeated, so did State. And as in so many past years, the conference title and the possibility of an undefeated season would be the stakes in Central Stadium.

Dane was well enough to walk a few minutes each day, but his chest remained strapped and one arm was bandaged sling-fashion. He still spent most of his time in bed.

Sally and Shaw picked him up from the hospital the Tuesday before the State game. They came with a chauffeur, Peterson, driving his relic Pierce-Arrow, and they helped him down the steps into the huge back seat, where they propped him with pillows and their own

bodies for the ride back to Bakerston. Peterson, in an old sheepskin shortcoat, its moth-eaten collar raised against the keening wind, rode alone in the front with the Whittaker television set on the seat beside him, nearly as propped and padded as Dane in the rear. The set was going into the Shaw guest-room with the patient, where Dane would see the game. Both were installed an hour later after Peterson, driving with a leisure alien to him, had traversed the valley road past the now bleak hills into the campus town.

Molly Shaw fussed over Dane, and the children came to his room to make obviously rehearsed and hesitant speeches of welcome. "We're going to see the State game with Mother," they told him. "We're sorry you can't play in it. We're glad you're here with us, and if you want us to, we'll keep you lots of company."

Dane thanked them. The big man and Peterson helped him into pajamas and put him in bed.

The temperature dropped near zero on Thanksgiving Day. Sally, driving down from Iron City to eat and spend the day with the Shaws, had spoken about it as she came into Dane's room. The cold did not abate Friday, and by the Saturday of the game the turf in Central Stadium was iron-hard underfoot. It would be a bruising battle; and Shaw, dropping in to say good morning, wondered whether or not to put the team in basketball shoes. "Cleats aren't going to take hold today." The big man also worried about his passing attack. "Be a lot of stiff fingers out there today. But they'll belong to both teams," he said. He looked at Dane seriously. "Wish I had you in there for a quarter or two. We'd run 'em some dizzy on my sweeps for a while."

"Don't think I wouldn't trade places, either," said Dane wryly. "Tell the guys luck for me, will you?"

Shaw grunted as he left.

The house was quiet when Sally came. Molly had packed the children into the car and gone down to the stadium shortly after noon, the kids in snow leggings, and layered with sweaters under their coats, Molly with two blankets piled on the seat beside her.

"Timmy raised hell again," explained Sally, kissing him. "I haven't been doing my job at all well. Unfortunately for Timmy, Mr. Hebert thinks it's more important to amuse you than to work, as long as the sports staff and its editor are hale. He sent you his best, and told me to play engineer on the television to the best of my ability. He doesn't want you to miss anything." She snapped on the set as she spoke, and the screen flared, burst into the quivering mass of a junior electrical storm, and then as Sally spun the dials, focused on the stadium.

"Hand me that bathrobe, will you, dear?" Dane swung his legs out of the bed. "I think I'll sit up with this one for a while."

She draped the robe over his shoulders, dragged a chair out a proper distance from the screen for him, then got another for herself. "The cozy old married couple before their warm fireside," she muttered. "If we ever get married enough to have one!"

"Shut up," said Eddie Dane.

State scored first. Midway through the second quarter, Jenkins, a slashing runner behind good blocking, bulled his way into the clear and went thirty yards to Central's ten before Perkins bounced him out of bounds. State scored on the next play with a sucker pass right down the middle. Floyd's desperation jump for the ball deflected it right into a State man's hands. Berg blocked the try for the extra point.

"Blast and double damn!" swore Dane.

Sally laughed at him. "Relax," she said. "You want a relapse?"

He shook his head at her.

Central took the ball on the ensuing kickoff. Perkins passed, gambling outrageously from his ten-yard line on the first play. Daniels plucked the ball out of the air behind the surprised State secondary and wound up at midfield before they dumped him. They slammed him hard, and Dane could see the tiny figure in the screen bounce. But the parade was on. Perkins, hammering the tackles and sweeping the ends with Floyd, Tripelda and Schwartz, boomed them down to the State two. He pulled the sneak for the rest of it, and seconds later, kicked the point. Central lead at the half seven to six.

The vicarious excitement and the inner knowledge of the action before him sent a flush into Dane's cheeks; and Sally, observing it, ordered him into bed. "What do you think you're doing?" she fretted. "Playing State? Stop working! Shaw has enough men without you to take this one. Come on now, bed! If you're a good lad, maybe I'll let you up again before the game's over." She snapped the set off, took the robe from his shoulders and packed him beneath the sheets.

Her touch was warm and sure, patting and smoothing the bed, making him comfortable. He reached his good arm around her neck and locked her, still bent over the bed, while he kissed her. She grabbed a handful of his hair and shook his head gently. "Behave. I'll go down and get you some milk."

He drank it when she returned. Sally snapped the set on again as he finished it, half-sitting, half-leaning on his pillows. He watched Central kick off, saw the line go down under the boot, a churning restlessness still within him. Sally was watching him, an amused smile on her face and her glance pulled his from the game. He met it directly, and in her eyes found a certainty, a sureness which he knew would endure for him forever.

"They'll pull this out," he said.

"Stop playing it."

He had a brief thought of Connor, of Shaw on the bench, and in a kaleidoscopic moment, of Berg, Perkins, of even the thousands of nameless faces in the stands. "Nobody ever stops," he said softly. "Not us. Not anybody."

"The big games go on," she murmured, understanding him. "Ours too. Watch the screen. You missed a play."

Central scored again late in the fourth quarter to put the game on ice. They sprang Rodrigues on a double reverse that Dane had never seen before, a play added for State. He watched the blocking, crisp, sharp, and even in the miniature of television, efficiently brutal. Rodrigues was in the end zone bouncing the ball, kissing it, throwing it away, and the gang was clustering about him. He could see the numbers on their jerseys as the cameras caught and held the milling gang. With an inner clarity that no camera would ever pick up, he saw the smeared-lip grins, the dirty rough-fondling hands, the bruised glee on their faces. He could almost hear Perkins bark them back to work, back to kick the point. He saw them line up, watched the precise kick thread the crossbars.

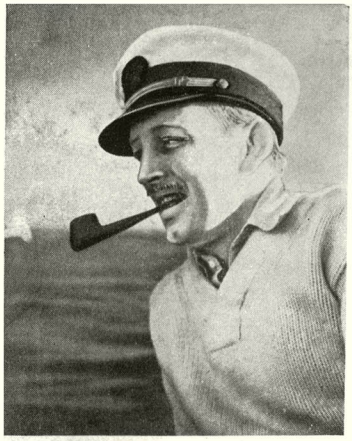
Now the club was trotting back, not haphazardly down the field, but loping down the sideline by the bench, touching, each man in turn, an object in Shaw's outstretched hand. The announcer was mouthing words, but Dane was not registering them. Shaw was holding a black jersey, loosely now, and the cameras picked up the exposed number. He knew that number well. It had been stamped on all the gear he had left in a locker a long time ago.

He knew now what Shaw's parting grunt had meant when he had wished him luck.

"What do you know?" he murmured. "What do you know?"

Sally leaned over and kissed him.

Who's Who *in this* Issue



Robert Carse

BORN: Riverdale-on-Hudson, New York City, July 9, 1902.

Educated: Yonkers, N. Y., Public School No. 3, the Hill School, Pottstown, Pa., and the Horace Mann School, N. Y. C.

Professional background: Served as police and general reporter and rewrite man, New York *Times,* 1922-'23-'24; St. Petersburg *Times,* Newark Evening *Ledger* and New York City News Association, 1924-'25. Publicity work with Selmer Fougner and Charles Bayer, Tampa and Oldsmar, Fla., 1925, also with Ivy Lee and Associates 1925.

Began career as free-lance writer fall of 1925. Wrote in following years novels "Horizon," "Siren Song," "Pacific" and "Heart's Desire," and fiction for such magazines as *Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, American Magazine, Redbook, Blue Book,* etc. Also fact articles and book reviews for such publications as New York *Times* and New York *Herald-Tribune* and a book about the European underground, "The Unconquered."

In February, 1942, joined United States Merchant Marine, serving as able-seaman, third, second and first officer. Throughout this service actively publicized Merchant Marine.

Wrote as part of this work series of three articles, "We Fought Through to Murmansk," which appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* November 7, 14, 21, 1942, and later in same year in book form published by William Morrow. (Total sales on this book to date, including Armed Forces Edition and English publication, over 200,000.) In 1943, wrote "Lifeline," history of United States Merchant Marine, with a preface by Captain Edward Macauley, Deputy Administrator, War Shipping Administration. Five thousand copies of this book bought by U. S. Navy.

Have lived in France, Haiti, Bermuda, Jamaica, B.W.I.; speak, read, write French fluently; have visited twenty-four countries, some of them repeatedly.

Hold the rank of Senior Lieutenant, U. S. Maritime Service, and Chief Mate's license, and: Combat Bar with star, Merchant Marine Defense Bar, Atlantic War Zone Bar, Mediterranean Middle East War Zone Bar, and Pacific War Zone Bar.

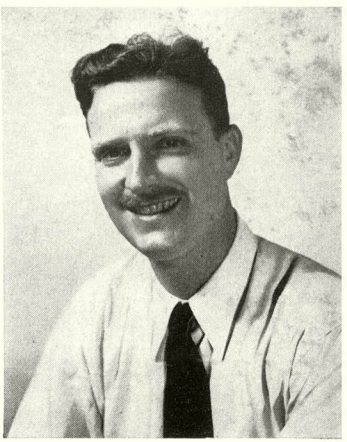
Member of the Authors League of America. Married; one child, daughter.

Albert I. Mayer

I WAS born, 1906, in Cincinnati and graduated from that city's University in 1928. The next two years I taught ancient history in a local high school.

Gradually, I launched on a literary career. Having been a tackle in College, I tried football stories because I was told to write only that about which I was familiar. None sold, in the beginning at least. I played golf once, tried a story on the subject, *Golfing Magazine* took it and called it "a honey." That was about 1930. Since then I suppose I've written close to two thousand short stories. Westminster Press published "Falconer's Son." *Harpers* brought out "Defense of the Castle."

Right now I'm living in Seaside Park, New Jersey, a small resort borough of which I'm mayor. (No puns, PLEASE, on the Mayor Mayer—I get enough of that.) I'm within a stone's throw of the ocean and am working on a novel, 1789-95, with a founding-of-Cincinnati setting. This is really the beginning of our western empire. Disastrous Harmar and St. Clair campaigns precede Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers, which finally opens the country west of the Alleghenies to the white man. Very little, if anything, has been written about this exciting and important phase of American history. When I finish this novel, which is to be called "Follow the River," I just know I won't have the will-power to resist trying one on small town politics. Being mayor of Seaside Park has certainly given me material. Every day I'm sure I've finally seen "everything;" then something else happens. Only yesterday a man pointed out that male dog licenses were a dollar; female, two dollars. His was a spayed bitch, and he felt the price should be one-fifty. See what I mean?



Carl L. Biemiller

HE is a thirty-six-year-old native Jerseyman, a resident of Haddonfield, where his four sons represent .0004 percent of the town's population. He is, at present, an associate editor of *Holiday* magazine, with a tenure extending from its pre-dummy embryo. He left high school with a football scholarship offer to greet the first major wave of modern collegiate "purity" in the days of the Carnegie investigation, which made the offer as valuable as lead pants to a halfback.

He thereafter went sulking off to the marts of trade, taking a shipbuilding job which taught him that steel was too heavy to lug around; whereupon he repaired to a ten-year hitch in the newspaper business, serving with the Philadelphia *Record,* the New York *Post* and the Camden *Courier-Post.* He has been a sports writer, reporter, columnist, promotion manager and an assistant to the publisher.

A starry-eyed fancier of mere money, he left the newspaper business for a swat at public relations in New York, fled for his life after a year, to try free-lance fiction writing, during which time he produced absolutely unsung masterpieces against the mood music of four kids howling around an empty refrigerator.

Encouraged by his ravishing beautiful wife, a newspaper man's daughter herself ("Go back to work, you bum!") he borrowed a necktie from a neighbor and asked a man for a job. The man betrayed him and gave him one. Naturally, he became a howling success, and as anyone who knows the glamorous magazine business can well imagine, it now takes four stalwart men to help him tote his salary home each week.

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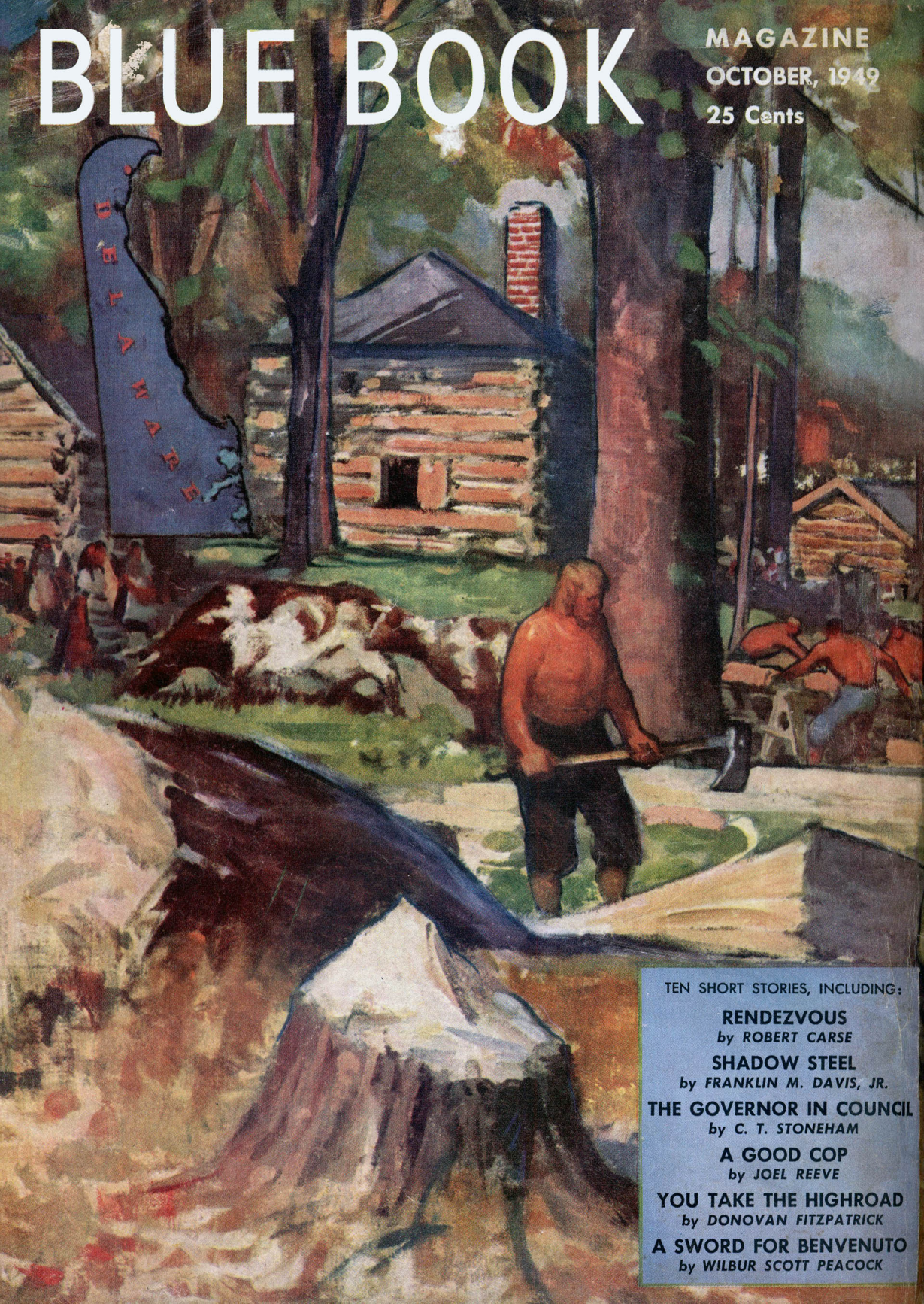

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