

SHERLOCK HOLMES - Dead or Alive? - By Will Oursler

# Bluebook

ADVENTURE IN FACT AND FICTION

25c  
MAY



SPORTS CARS AREN'T FOR SISSIES!

By LIONEL WHITE

WHO IS BASEBALL'S GREATEST HITTER?

SEE PAGE 66

Who wrote what  
in this month's  
Bluebook

# Purely Personal

You get some idea of why we selected Lionel White to do our sports-car story ("Sports Aren't for Sissies!," pages 24-30), when you read what the boy has to say for himself about automobiles.

"As a young newspaper reporter in New York," he writes. "I used the sub-



way. As a detective story magazine editor, I drove a three-year-old Ford. As a magazine publisher, I tried a Rolls Royce, a Cadillac, an MG and a Fiat. And now, as a writer, I'm chauffeuring a Chevy convertible—eleven years old. Apparently I should have stuck to publishing."

Now living in Florida, Lionel further reports that "I fish, show dogs, play chess (well), play poker (badly), race speedboats and beachcomb. The latter I do very well. I have a wife who doesn't work and a son who won't. But he's only 6, so I still have hopes for him.

"I am happy."

For added evidence, see cut.

\* \* \*

Luis Kutner, who with W. T. Bran-  
non wrote this month's book-lengther,  
"Life in 12 Minutes" (pages 94-128), is  
a Chicago lawyer who could be the real-  
life double for the novel's hero, *Peter  
Justice*. For Kutner looks, acts, talks  
and thinks like *Justice*; but what is more  
important, his hobby is the same as our  
novel's hero—meaning that Kutner frees  
people who are in jail unjustly. Is he  
successful at it? At last count, the num-  
ber he'd been instrumental in springing  
from stir totaled 1,017.

His collaborator, Bill Brannon, has

written some 800 crime stories, some fic-  
tion, one movie, one fact-crime book,  
one criminal biography, and one mystery  
novel. "I write until 4 o'clock in the  
morning," he tells us, "sleep late, and  
everybody says I'm odd—except my  
wife, who probably thinks so."

\* \* \*

Burnham Carter, who wrote "Law of  
the Islands" (pages 46-51), claims he  
got the idea one night last summer while  
cruising along the coast of Maine and



tying up alongside several herring-fish-  
ing boats in the cove of an uninhabited  
island. "The scene was as colorful, the  
herring as numerous, the island as love-  
ly, as they are in the story," he says.  
"But, alas, no beautiful girl. *She* was  
fictive."

For twenty years a New York busi-  
nessman, Burnham retired six years ago  
to Cornish, New Hampshire, where he  
lives with his wife, writes, works in his  
garden, serves as vice-president of the  
Society for the Protection of New Hamp-  
shire's Forests, and dabbles in politics  
(he was Chairman of the Education  
Committee in the 1951 session of the  
State Legislature).

His one request: "Don't misquote me."  
We haven't.

\* \* \*

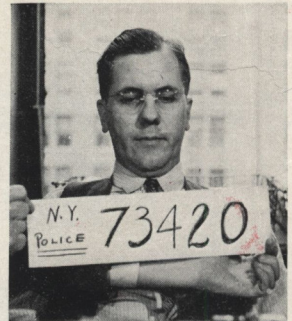
One of the few writers in the crime  
field who does both fact and fiction as  
a regular thing, Will Oursler, author of  
"Sherlock Holmes—Dead or Alive?"  
(pages 6-12), is Executive Vice-Presi-  
dent of the Mystery Writers of America,

the Sanhedrin of the murder-for-profit  
dodge, and a guy who is vitally inter-  
ested in the legend of Sherlock Holmes.  
(As a member of the Baker Street Ir-  
regulars, the boys who light votive can-  
dles in honor of Holmes, Will visited  
London recently and paid his respects at  
221-B Baker Street, Holmes' traditional  
residence.)

But, while he refused to do more than  
mumble about it, Will promises to startle  
the world soon with a new discovery in  
the Holmes saga—he has evidence to  
show what happened to Dr. Watson dur-  
ing the three years Holmes was thought  
to be dead. Sounds like something he  
ought to be forced to tell.

\* \* \*

The sinister-looking gent in the photo  
below is W. A. Swanberg, also known as  
Bill Swanberg, who wrote "The Case of  
the Starving Canary" (pages 81-88).



But, although he looks here like a candi-  
date for Leavenworth, Bill insists he is  
strictly on the side of the law despite  
the fact that his Connecticut house is  
cluttered with newspaper accounts of  
the misdeeds of others, all of which he  
puts into fancy words and sells to un-  
wary editors like us. Although he says  
he personally has never broken a law,  
Bill claims to have talked with enough  
cops to have flat feet, to have inter-  
viewed enough criminals to write a book  
on the subject, and to know enough  
about crime to realize that policemen  
are the most-maligned group extant.  
Saying which, he'll probably get a traffic  
summons tomorrow.

**COMING  
UP**



Once the June issue of *Bluebook* has appeared, there will no longer be any excuse for anyone's not becoming a millionaire practically overnight. The reason is our big June feature, "Canada Goes BOOM!" This sparkling essay not only tells you why Canada today is virtually on the threshold of a prosperity akin to that which hit the United States fifty years ago; it goes a step beyond that and tells you how you can get on this bandwagon and get rich along with the Canadians. For this piece will name names; it will list the towns where fortunes are waiting for the taker, and it will tell the kinds and types of workers needed in every boom settlement north of the border. So, if you're thinking of making a change, don't do anything till the June *Bluebook* goes on sale. It may easily affect your whole future!

\* \* \*

Virtually every magazine and newspaper—stimulated by the Christine Jorgenson case—has come up with one story or another on the subject of sex conversion. Yet the fact remains that the rarest case of all in this category, a type which has occurred only about thirty times in all medical history, is that of the true hermaphrodite, the individual having the characteristics of both sexes and who has the freedom to tell the doctors which sex it wants to have after an operation has been performed. And a doctor who actually performed one of these rare operations, Dr. Louis W. Maraventano, now is willing to write about this strange, heart-tugging case exclusively for the readers of *Bluebook*. His factual, frank and authentic story—prior to publication in medical journals—will be yours in the June issue. If human life, and its myriad problems, interests you at all, you won't want to miss this one, for it will be the talk of the medical world.

\* \* \*

The rest of the big June issue? Why, naturally, the same big helping of action and adventure as always. There'll be a flock of other good articles, the usual book-length novel, short stories on Army life, sailing, bull-fighting, carnivals, the West, baseball, flying, and, of course, men and women. There'll be a novelette that's a shocker (because of its daring theme), a short-short or two, plenty of funny cartoons, fancy fillers, bright sayings, and prizes for the kiddies.

\* \* \*

Come on, June, hurry, hurry, hurry.

# Bluebook

ADVENTURE IN FACT AND FICTION

May, 1953

MAGAZINE

Vol. 97, No. 1

Trademark Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.

PHILLIPS WYMAN, *Publisher*

• MAXWELL HAMILTON •  
*Editor*

LEN ROMAGNA  
*Art Editor*

SUMNER PLUNKETT  
*Assistant Editor*

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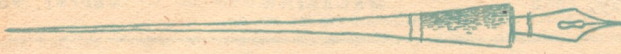
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The short stories and novels herein are fiction and intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

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# PRO and CON



Address all letters to: THE EDITOR, Bluebook Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. All letters must be signed. None can be acknowledged or returned.

## Ladies Aid

To the Editor:  
"BLUEBOOK—For Men, By Men."  
NUTS!

I thoroughly believe that if more women would read the down-to-earth, so-called men's books (and I don't mean the girlie books, either!), they not only would get along better with their husbands (or boy friends) but also get along better with themselves.

I look forward to the new BLUEBOOK every month, and I faithfully read it from cover to cover. And between those covers, I find education, good reading, fun, and a world-wide outlook on many subjects.

So, please, no matter what some knotheads think, keep those BLUEBOOKS rolling—for women who know a good magazine when they see one.

Mrs. Arvi Kangas.

Spokane, Wash.

To the Editor:

After thoroughly enjoying BLUEBOOK for several years, I find your intended-to-be-inviting little phrases about "all male fiction" and "the best in adventure fact and fiction for men"

slightly irritating. Just because you don't include the latest recipes and fashions, you have no grounds for feeling that your material is peculiar to male readers.

I find your stories are as stimulating as does my husband (incidentally, I introduced *him* to BLUEBOOK!), and I know that many other gals do too. I welcome the absence of cumbersome advertisements on your pages, and I have an idea that, to account for this, you either have to attract a tremendous number of subscribers, or you are extremely wealthy.

If the former is true, then you ought not boldly to shout that yours is a men's magazine; because there are an awful lot of women in this country who like to read, too. You don't have to change BLUEBOOK's quality one bit in order to include us women among your loyal followers; just welcome us, and stop putting "Keep Out!" signs all over the place, which make a woman feel like a child locked up in the bathroom reading a naughty book, just because she happens to enjoy BLUEBOOK (and I don't see how she can help enjoying it.)

So, keep up the good work. And try not to forget that women are peo-

ple, too, no matter what you read to the contrary.

Stevie Lasley.

Albuquerque, N. M.

*Now, take it easy, girls. As we've said before, we love you all, consecutively and avidly. And we really don't care who buys BLUEBOOK, as long as the bank says all twenty-five-cent pieces are alike. But we've always aimed at men, and will continue to do so, because the poor dopes have so few places and things they can call their own these days. So, stick around. But don't start putting up chintz curtains, or try throwing out the gaboons. Okay?* —Ed.

## Tragic Thought

To the Editor:

A recent article in BLUEBOOK by Joseph Lawrence "Down With Pigeons!" (April, 1952) suggested a rather startling thought in our household. Perhaps it's pure coincidence, but here's the story:

A few years ago, I rescued and brought into our home a crippled pigeon, intending to nurse it back to health. Our youngster, age 3, was quite taken by it, and constantly hovered over and around the box in which the pigeon was kept. The pigeon, however, died in a few days, and our son died three days later—of polio. (I should mention that, due to bad weather, our son hadn't been out of the house, and his only outside contact was with that pigeon.)

Now, is it possible that these birds might carry the polio germ from their often-polluted sources of food and water? Could it be in their droppings, which seem to be all over everything? Or wafted about by them from the mud and filth in which one sometimes sees them wallow?

Since the origin and method of communication of these germs is unknown, I feel that no reasonable possibility should be overlooked in the fight against this dreaded disease. Who knows—perhaps Mr. Lawrence may have hit the jackpot!

F. A. Rodenhiser.

Malden, Mass.

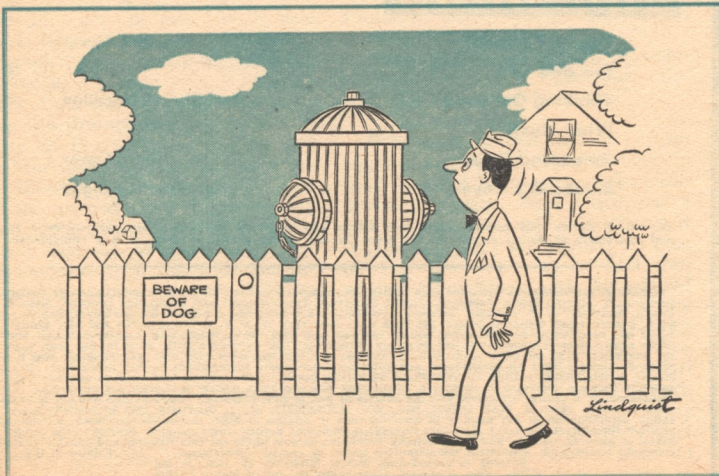
## Where Are We?

To the Editor:

Your February issue carries a story called "The Hostages," by Jon Cleary, from which I quote:

"We were on U.S. 40, heading east from Battle Mountain toward Winnemucca."

Being familiar with that part of the country, I believe that, by consulting a Nevada road-map, you'll find that Winnemucca is quite a bit northwest of Battle Mountain, and if Mr. Cleary



or his protagonist headed east in search of it, they're probably still out on the highway somewhere, and possibly as far east as Singapore without yet reaching Battle Mountain.

R. L. Gilmore.

Hastings, Neb.

*Search party just left, Mr. Gilmore. Hope to have Cleary and his boy safe by next month. —Ed.*

### Here's Harold

To the Editor:

After reading "Bone of Contention," by Joe Coogan (Feb. BLUEBOOK), I should like to notify Joe that *Harold*, his gorilla hero of that story, may still be out here in the windy State of South Dakota. A large unidentified animal has been seen roaming in the vicinity of Ethan, and, although a posse was sent out to round up the beast, it has eluded them. But, after reading Joe's story, I'm sure the animal must be *Harold*, and, in the best interests of humanity, I am suggesting that Joe get out here fast and take charge of the search. A valuable ape like that shouldn't be left to run loose out in this country of torclones and cynadoes (we never call them hurri-phaons).

Charles Sisk.

Vermillion, S. D.

### History (!?)

To the Editor:

The February BLUEBOOK contains a quiz by Joseph C. Stacey.

Question 8 concerned a George who accompanied Meriwether Lewis in the exploration of the Northwest Territory. William Clark, the Clark of the Lewis & Clark expedition, and George Rogers Clark, who captured Detroit from the British, were both from Virginia. But there the similarity ends.

To paraphrase a current TV series, when the Lewis & Clark expedition departed from St. Louis in 1804, and reached the Columbia River the following year, George was not there. Sorry!

Your magazine has been and continues to be a source of reading enjoyment. Thank you for it.

Lt. Col. R. M. McMahon.

Arlington, Va.

*The hell with quizzes. —Ed.*

To the Editor:

Now, don't say that! Your trouble is that you underestimate the intelligence of your readers. Now take this quiz, for example:

About the only thing in common the 12 famous men listed below have is their first name—George. Can you, from the thumbnail sketch in each in-

stance, fill in the blank spaces with their correct last names?

1. *George*—Famous composer; wistles off key and is in love with the girl next door.

2. *George*—Father of seven kids who like to chase each other through our flower-beds.

3. *George*—General nuisance; always phones at the wrong time.

4. *George*—Wrestler; known to his intimates as "Gorgeous."

5. *George*—Admiral; handles his fleet perfectly, never loses a battle.

6. *George*—He hauls it away each Monday.

7. *George*—Writer of numerous short stories, some of which have been published. Available.

8. *George*—Also known as "The Grand Canyon."

9. *George*—Reckless driver. Will win at Indianapolis, if he enters.

10. *George*—My wife's brother, will go far (I hope).

J. W. Benjamin.

Lewisburg, Va.

### More Back Talk

To the Editor:

In your January issue, you had an item titled "Bigwig Back Talk," in which you say Noel Coward sent a message to Winston Churchill, along with two tickets to the writer's next play; and his comment to Churchill was that one ticket was for the statesman, and the other for a friend, "if you have one." And Churchill is supposed to have replied that he couldn't come to the first-night performance, but would be at the second one, "if you have one."

However, in a biography of Churchill, by Robert Lewis Taylor, it was not Noel Coward but George Bernard Shaw who is said to have sent the tickets to Churchill. Will you kindly

tell me which is the correct version of this story?

L. L. Gardner.

Bangor, Me.

*Frankly, we don't know. Since we ran that item, we've seen it credited to Coward and Churchill, Shaw and Churchill, Shaw and Douglas Fairbanks, A. A. Milne and George V, George S. Kaufman and Alexander Woollcott, Moss Hart and Tex Rickard, and Ring Lardner and Captain Bob Bartlett. Our personal guess is that none of these gents ever said anything of the kind. —Ed.*

### Have a Smoke

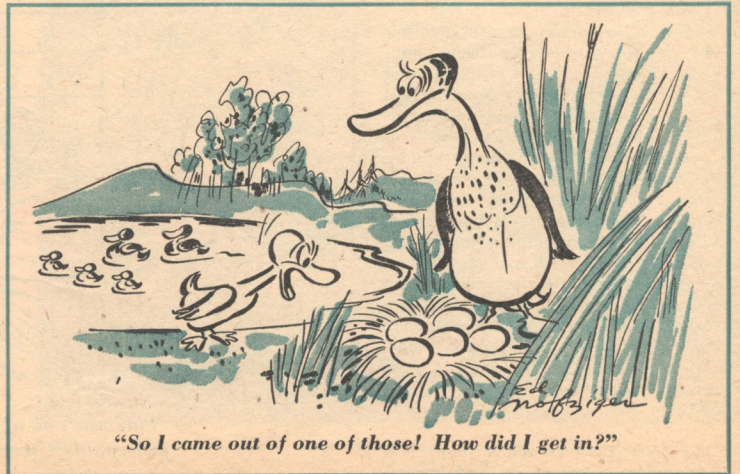
To the Editor:

In "Got a Light?" (Feb.), you say there are over 40 brands of American cigarettes. None of us here on the ship can think of more than 36. Could you list them?

Fred LaRiccia.

U.S.C.G. Sebag,  
Boston, Mass.

*Alligator, Avalon, Parliament, Virginia Rounds, Camels, Cavalier, Chelsea, Chesterfield, Domino, Dunhill, Egyptian Deities, Embassy, Encore, Fairfax, Fatima, Five Star, Helmar, Holiday, Home Run, Johnnie Walker, Kent, Kool, Lord Salisbury, Lucky Strike, Mapleton, Marlboro, Marvels, Melachrino, Mogul, Murad, Old Gold, Omar, Pall Mall, Picayune, Piedmont, Philip Morris, Players, Raleigh, Rameses, Regents, Rum & Maple, Sano, Stratford, Sheffield, Spud, Sweet Caporal, Tareyton, Three Kings, Viceroy, Wings, and 20 others whose names we never heard of, but of which "The Western Tobacconist," of San Francisco, has a record. And they're all made in America. —Ed.*





# Thinking Out Loud



Along about a year ago, when we ran a piece by Specs Toporcer called "The Greatest Pitcher of all Time," the distinguished author of this essay shook a fist under our chin and allowed as how we hadn't seen the last of him by any means. "I'll be back next year," he rasped, "when I will do a story for you called 'The Greatest Hitter of all Time.'"

We laughed, and kicked Mr. Toporcer down the stairs. Now here it is next year, and there, on pages 66-73 is, of all things, "The Greatest Hitter of all Time." And, before you react as we did and simply assume that the greatest hitter of all time can be no one but Tyrus Raymond Cobb (after all, has anyone a *higher* lifetime average?), you'd better turn to page 66 and see what Specs has to say. It's all rather illuminating, and maybe even the guy Specs picks will surprise you somewhat. It did us, we know.

\* \* \*

During the course of our labors on behalf of the sports-car story ("Sports Aren't for Sissies"), which you will find reposing on pages 24-30, we had occasion to receive some rather expert attention from a gentleman up in Connecticut who handles press relations for the Sports Car Club of America. One of the releases he sent us described the various events involving sports cars which the club will sponsor this year, and most of these sound just peachy—so peachy in fact, that we figure we'll plan to attend at least as many of them as we can without getting fired for shirking.

The one we'd give our three-year-old Pontiac to see, however, is a clambake which is listed, simply and starkly, on the program as "The Michigan Press-On-Regardless Rally."

Somehow, although there's glamour and excitement galore in the Bridgehampton Road Races, and the Watkins Glen Grand Prix, and the Mt. Equinox Hill Climb, The Michigan Press-On-Regardless Rally has a touch all its own. You conjure up a vision of a driver sliding into the pits out there in Michigan, his left front tire rubbing against his elbow, his piston rings lying in a heap in his lap, and one of his carbs jumping through the hood—and his pit crew standing there in horror at his having the temerity to stop pressing on regardless (old chap).

As the girl who opens the mail said, "The name doesn't sound right, somehow. It sounds as if it ought to be Press-On-Irregardless."

\* \* \*

The *New York Herald Tribune* is a never-ending source of joy and inspira-

stray dog who then shot and seriously wounded himself."

We have since called the animal hospital a dozen times to see how the pooch is making out, and if Bowser prefers a .38 or a .45. So far, the mutt isn't talking.

\* \* \*

So we are in receipt of a letter from a gentleman in Colorado, who takes on pretty much as follows:

"I like *Bluebook* and never miss an issue. But, let's face it, fellows, you're putting out a man's magazine. So why not use nothing but men writers?"

"When I see a story in the book with a lady listed as the writer thereof, I immediately turn the page, and skip that story entirely. I just don't think a woman has anything to say I haven't heard before, but louder."

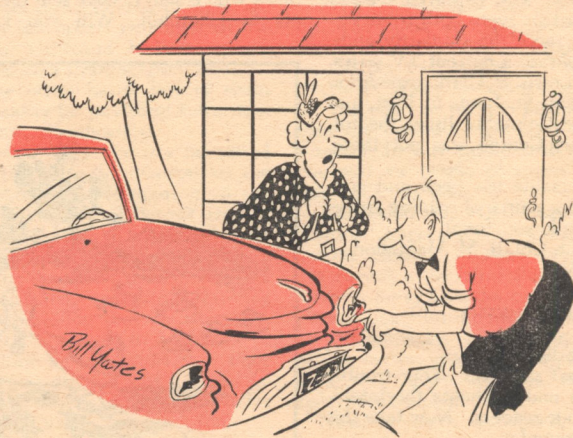
Well, now, *wait* a minute, Jack! You don't really mean that. We agree the males are our primary interest in this little printing party; but it's male readers we're concerned with, and not the writers. We don't care who writes the stuff, so long as it's real slick reading for men; and we'd even publish something by that gun-happy pooch the *Herald Tribune* wrote about, if we could just get the damn dog, or his agent, on the phone.

We still think, for example, that one of the best adventure-and-suspense yarns we've ever run in *Bluebook* was "The Davidian Report," which was our book-lengthener last April. The author: Dorothy B. Hughes, who we can assure you is all woman. Remember, too, that the top

tion to us, bringing us, as it does, our daily serving of woe and weather, joy, whimsy and what-not. And, occasionally, the *Trib* really outdoes itself and prints something which we don't know whether to frame, fondle or mail to our psychiatrist.

Anyway, there was this story about a gent who'd shot his wife, up Connecticut way. And the *Trib*, which looks on the dog show in Madison Square Garden as being at least as important as World War III, went on to say that "The victim, a dog fancier of Stamford, was shot after a quarrel with her husband over a

## ...AND YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT 'EM



"This was one of those days when I just couldn't seem to get stopped."

mystery writers of the day, the ones who can scare hell out of you without even trying, all are women, too, as witness Agatha Christie, Leslie Ford, Mignon Eberhart, Doris Miles Disney, Helen Reilly, and the lady who lives upstairs, whose hat even would frighten you silly.

\* \* \*

The girl in the office we told you about up ahead a piece, the one who opens the mail and who commented on our sports-car yarn, also had some mutterings to make about our article titled "There *Are* Sea Serpents!" (pages 52-56).

"There sure are," she growled. "One of them even tried to pinch me at Jones Beach last summer, just before I slapped his silly face."

\* \* \*

Tom Roan, who penned "Alabama Diverce—Cafeteria Style," which you will spot on pages 43-45, did the yarn for us and then announced that he planned to spend the rest of this year in a cave. "And, if you're as smart as I think you are," he wrote, "you'll find a cave of your own. Because, as an Alabaman, I don't think the folks down this-a-way are going to like your publicizing their legal proceedings very much."

So, what we did, we sent a carbon of the story down to Roy D. McCord, a lawyer who parks his briefcase in Gadsden, Alabama, and asked him to comment on the piece prior to its publication. We've just received Counselor McCord's answer. "At your request," he writes, "I've read your story, and while I do not condone some of your methods, these things do happen down here. Yours truly, Roy D. McCord."

So, before you start working us over on this one, take another look at Counselor McCord's letter. And note what he says about our methods.

Grrrr!

\* \* \*

Winding up, we think your attention ought to be called to this month's book-lengther, "Life in Twelve Minutes," which tees off on page 94.

As usual, this is a honey of a story, and one which, incidentally, is based on facts. It's no secret that a lot of chaps have been tossed in the clink unjustly, and we don't think we're violating any confidences when we suggest that an occasional unfortunate has landed in the electric chair for a crime he didn't commit. In short, it can happen to anybody, just as it's told in our story.

What we think makes this a particularly significant novel, however, is that it's the first crime story we've seen in years in which *there is not a trace of sex, and not a shot is fired!*

And we'll bet we'll still get the usual slew of nasty letters. Might even get one from Mickey Spillane himself this time.

MAXWELL HAMILTON

# What Next!

**REWARD . . .** In Argentina, actor Pepe Martin played a villain in a radio show so convincingly that irate citizens beat him unconscious when he left the studio.

**THE OLD WEST . . .** In Woodland, Calif., as Mrs. Marvin E. Howard was riding a horse on her ranch, a plane landed near her and the pilot jumped out, asked directions to Sacramento, climbed back into the plane and took off.

**HEY, BUDDY . . .** In Detroit, police removed Algene Choate to stronger lodgings in the county jail after they found the 5-foot-9-inch 150-pounder sitting nonchalantly on top of the cell block smoking a cigarette, with twisted steel bars demonstrating his method of escape. "I wouldn't have done it," Choate said, "but I wanted to borrow a cigarette."

**DELAYED ACTION . . .** In Columbus, the windows of an auto were soaped while it was parked on the street, two days later the windows were cleaned when the car was again parked in the same spot.

**NATURALLY . . .** In Dublin, when none of the bystanders could descend forty feet into a well to retrieve a baby kitten, the mother cat was lowered on a rope, then raised to the surface with the kitten grasped in her mouth.

**LUCKY STRIKE . . .** In Miami, Dan Ray fell asleep while smoking and awoke with his clothing on fire, fell off the porch while beating the flames, landed on a water faucet which broke and put out the flames.

**WANTED . . .** In Pratt, Kansas, iron-jawed aerialist Jesus Cordona was swinging by his teeth on a high trapeze when three of his uppers snapped off and he plunged toward the ground, in the nick of time catching the legs of his sister, who was also swinging by her teeth. Undaunted, Cordona is now looking for a set of strong false molars.

**STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN . . .** In Syracuse, a petition to serve five years in a chain gang was signed by over one hundred people who didn't read what they were signing.

**LAME EXCUSE . . .** In Niles, Calif., when Harry Short was arrested for burglary and asked why he was carrying a 12-inch claw bar, a 10-inch screwdriver, a hacksaw and blades, and a three-cornered file, he explained he had a wooden leg and needed all those things to keep it in walking order.

**COMPETITION . . .** In Birmingham, red-faced civil defense officials installed more air-raid sirens after a test alert was drowned out by a department-store set of chimes playing Brahms' "Lullaby."

**RED-HOT . . .** In Carson City, Nev., after a trusty made off with one of the State Prison's red trucks, sold its load of farm equipment and stopped for several drinks before abandoning it, the warden ordered the prison rolling stock repainted with large black and white stripes.

**A is for AWKWARD . . .** In Fort Worth, Lester Fox, who had driven 175,000 miles in 35 years without a traffic ticket, got one for going 40 in a 30-mile-an-hour zone on the day before he was given a safe-driving award.





# SHERLOCK HOLMES-

## DEAD OR ALIVE?

• By WILL OURSLER



Writer John Dickson Carr, latest to revive the Holmes legend, Conan Doyle's son, Adrian Doyle, and Will Oursler, at a recent get-together.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO—when the Brinks' robbery rocked Boston, and bandits in Halloween masks made off with a million in cash—some proper Bostonians turned nostalgic thoughts to the well-known detective, Sherlock Holmes.

"If Mr. Holmes were here in America," one Beacon Street clubman was heard to mutter, "the business would be solved with dispatch."

Others in the city apparently shared his view. At least one outraged citizen reportedly called Boston police headquarters, urging the authorities to cable Holmes for immediate assistance.

"You admit you're stumped," the gentleman declared acidly. "I suggest you bring in someone with experience."

Of course, it was in humorous vein. But the authorities were, as the caller alleged, thoroughly baffled—to such an extent that they were ready to grasp at any straw, however unorthodox it might appear.

Lacking Holmes' address—he is said to live in retirement in Sussex, cultivating bees—the police did the next best thing. They called upon members of the

*There are those who say*

*Sherlock Holmes never existed  
except in the pages of a book*

*In fact, there are some fools  
who say he isn't even alive today.*

*Maybe Holmes himself  
could solve the puzzle.*

Speckled Band, Boston branch of the Sherlockian devotees known as the Baker Street Irregulars.

No more extraordinary conference can be found in the annals of crime. Here were hard-boiled cops, meeting with reputedly "strange and deluded" fans of a supposedly fictional detective—and pleading for a clue to a real-life, million-dollar robbery!

But unhappily, despite prodigious search in the Sacred Writings—*i.e.*, the Sherlock Holmes stories—not even a whiff of a clue to the missing million was uncovered. The discouraged police returned to more prosaic procedure—with, it may be added, similar results.

The incident itself, however, reveals the remarkable public attitude which exists in relation to the colorful individual known as Sherlock Holmes.

Probably no figure in modern times is known and loved by so many people, in every corner of the earth. The Holmes stories, as presented under the signature of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, have been translated into almost every language on earth. Eskimos in igloos and savages in South American jungles alike have read the Sacred Writings, in their own dialects.

Nearly a billion copies of the various Sherlockian titles have been printed, a record unrivaled in literature except by the Bible, and possibly Shakespeare.

Holmes' personal fame is universal. Millions know what he looks like, what he wears, how he talks. And to tens of thousands, his reality is unquestioned. They write letters to him, at 221-B Baker Street, London. They denounce him, praise him, and seek his advice, his guidance and his autographed picture.

Others speak or write of him as they might of some well-regarded friend or associate. Hundreds of essays and articles on his personality, his talents and his methods have been published.

**T**HE legend of a living Holmes is one of the most amazing sagas of our era. In one way or another, it has involved some of our most famous figures, including the late Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Elmer Davis, the commentator, Christopher Morley, and a galaxy of others.

What is behind these fantastic events? Why do people believe in Sherlock Holmes so completely? Why do they want to believe in him at all?

A number of men have turned into legendary figures after they died; but, as one Sherlockian scholar phrased it, Holmes is the sole example of the process in reverse. He is the legend which insisted on coming to life.

So much so, in fact, that he now is the center of a currently sizzling feud

between the Baker Street Irregulars and Adrian and Denis Conan Doyle, sons of the late Sir Arthur.

The Doyle heirs feel that the rôle of Sir Arthur is being pushed into the background, while Sir Arthur's creation, Sherlock Holmes, is hogging the spotlight and the glory.

And they are entirely correct.

Early in 1953, a ballet was staged in London, based on the achievements of Sherlock Holmes and his associate, Dr. Watson. It was an interesting choreographic interpretation of the detective and his methods.

**N**ow, ordinarily, a new ballet is a subject of localized interest, on an inside page of one's newspaper. But in this instance, because it concerned Holmes, it was front-page news all over the world.

Declared the conservative *New York Herald Tribune*, in a special dispatch, "Sherlock Holmes, the world's best-known detective, made his debut in ballet tonight. . . . Dancing loyally at his side was Dr. Watson, who served as a prop not only for the great detective but also for the ballerinas. . . ."

Describing the performance in some detail, the article stated that Mr. Holmes was enthusiastically received in his latest rôle. "Having appeared in print, in the legitimate theater, in radio and television, and now in the ballet," the story concluded, "it seems that opera is the only field he has yet to conquer."

Perhaps the most revealing sidelight is that *nowhere, in any of the news reports, nor in the editorials commenting on this ballet, was there reference to Holmes as a character of fiction!*

Editorially, the *Tribune* lashed out at the Sadler's Wells Company in London for daring to portray Holmes in the rôle of a ballet dancer. "The thought of Holmes disporting himself upon the stage, and in tights at that, is nothing less than revolting," the paper stated.

This attitude is hardly the sort one assumes toward a mere fictitious personality. It is closer to that reserved for respected public figures, ex-Presidents and retired prime ministers.

But it is precisely this attitude which led to the great rift between the Conan Doyle heirs and the Baker Street Irregulars—since the latter preach the actuality of Holmes and Watson, and the unquestioned veracity of the Sacred Writings.

Edgar W. Smith, prominent Sherlockian and secretary, or "Buttons," as he is called, of the Irregulars, informed this writer that the trouble began several years back, when Denis Conan Doyle attended a Baker Street

dinner in New York, one bitter night early in January.

(The Irregulars always hold the annual dinner as close as possible to January 6th. Pains-taking research has revealed that Holmes was born on January 6, 1854, in the town of Mycroft, Yorkshire, England.)

According to Smith, Denis listened with bewilderment to the various toasts offered to Holmes and his entourage, and to the scholarly reports on various aspects of the investigator's career.

At last he turned to Smith and whispered under his breath, "I don't understand this! My father's name has not been mentioned."

Smith whispered that he would explain the whole thing later. He added that it was probably the highest compliment ever paid in the history of literature.

"No other writer, not even Shakespeare," Smith afterward pointed out to Denis, "can boast of creating a character so vivid that people believe in the character rather than the author."

"But what rôle is my father supposed to have played in all this?" Sir Arthur's son demanded. "Surely, no one could believe that Dr. Watson—"

**S**MITH hurriedly unfolded the Irregulars' whimsical concept. "Dr. Watson wrote up the cases, of course. They were all quite factual. Sir Arthur was—so to speak—the literary agent."

He went on to describe how, in the lore of the Irregulars, Doyle is pictured as a struggling young physician, delighted at the chance to "peddle" the cases his friend Dr. Watson had written up.

Young Denis shook his head in grave disapproval.

The "feud" exploded with increased acrimony in the summer of 1952, when Adrian, Conan Doyle's older son, came to America with an exhibit of a "reconstruction" of the Baker Street flat, plus other Holmesian memorabilia.

During the New York exhibit, Adrian took time out to denounce certain "unnamed" groups for writing fake "scholarly" reports and spreading untruths about Holmes and Watson, including the scandalous allegation that Dr. Watson was a woman—a thesis which the Irregulars themselves, of course, have never accepted.

He also disclosed that, to combat this business, he and famed writer John Dickson Carr, biographer of Sir Arthur, were launching a new series of Holmes stories, based on cases referred to by Dr. Watson but never told.

First of this new series appeared in the 1952 Christmas issue of *Life* Magazine.

Illustrated by DAVE STONE

Public interest in the story ran high. But reaction, particularly from Sherlockian devotees, was, to put it mildly, somewhat mixed. Written in the flowing tempo of the originals, the story was called, "The Adventure of the Seven Clocks."

The distinguished members of the Baker Street Irregulars called it by several other names, practically none of them printable.

At their 1953 annual dinner, in a restaurant in the old Chelsea section of New York, they ripped into Editor Herbert Brean, of *Life*. Mr. Brean not only stoutly defended the story, but even boasted that he was the editor who first suggested its publication.

They were at him from every quarter. Rex Stout attacked from the left, Ellery Queen from the right. The assault was joined by Dr. Richard Hoffmann, the well-known psychiatrist, reinforced by the noted naval and military expert, Fletcher Pratt, and a regiment of others.

Had Brean no shame? Did he not recognize the insult to Mr. Holmes in such a pastiche as this? Did he not realize that Sir Arthur was, after all, merely the merchandiser of Dr. Watson's masterpieces?

It was all strictly in whimsy. Editor Brean defended himself with cool courage. He pointed to the hundreds of letters received, almost all of them favorable to the story. "They found things wrong with it, sure," he admitted. "But on the whole it is a pretty good piece of fiction."

There were shouts of protest. Rex Stout jumped to his feet. "Fiction!" he cried. "Apparently, you do not understand. This thing is fiction, yes. But there is no fiction in the cases of Mr. Holmes. It is all true. It all happened."

Cheers filled the glittering private dining-room. Editor Brean returned to his dessert, taking what comfort he could from the fact that everybody at the dinner had a copy of *Life*, and many seemed deeply engrossed in "The Seven Clocks."

The almost supernal power of Holmes to capture and hold the imagination was rooted in his character, even if one accepts the mundane version that he was born in the financially-harassed mind of young Dr. Conan Doyle.

Short of cash and patients, the gifted young man had decided to try his hand at short stories. Something to do with murder, and detection, like the stories the American named Poe had written, but with sharper reasoning.

The idea of a brilliant, analytical detective for a hero came to Doyle when he recalled a teacher of his in medical school, a Dr. Joseph Bell,



Sherlock Holmes in his London flat, as he was depicted in the early Conan Doyle stories. So realistic to readers were these drawings of the great detective that many were sure they recognized Holmes on the street, and visitors to London had no trouble locating his flat.

surgeon, of Edinburgh, Scotland. Dr. Bell was noted for an extraordinary ability to diagnose medical cases by his powers of observation and deduction. He enjoyed impressing students with his remarkable powers, and their own lack of observation.

On one occasion, Dr. Bell requested Doyle and others in the class to suggest a diagnosis, solely by observation, of a man who walked with a limp.

Suggestions from the students varied widely. One insisted the man was suffering from a rare form of hip disease. Dr. Bell grunted with disgust.

"Observe!" he cried. "Look at the slits in the man's shoes, obviously done to relieve pressure. Rare hip disease! The man is suffering from nothing more rare than a bad case of corns."

One can almost hear the voice of Sherlock Holmes, explaining impatiently, to the open-mouthed amazement of Dr. Watson, exactly how the deduction was made.

It was Dr. Bell's habit also to determine, as Holmes later was to do, the trade or profession of those who came to the clinic by close observation of clothes, posture, hands and other details. His abilities never failed to delight and astound.

Once, after describing one case as alcoholism, he added with a touch of irony typical of Holmes, "Verification of my diagnosis is provided by

the neck of the bottle protruding from this patient's trouser pocket."

Clearly, Dr. Bell furnished the prototype for a large part of Holmes' character. But there is also no question that Doyle embodied much of himself in Holmes, and in Dr. Watson as well.

Howard Haycraft, famed critic and author of "Murder for Pleasure," told this writer, "Sherlock, in one sense, is the man Conan Doyle wanted to be. Dr. Watson is closer to what Doyle was—as he saw himself."

In spite of the smashing success of Holmes, both in England and America, Conan Doyle regarded his great detective as a minor creation at best, not to be compared with his more serious literary efforts.

It is this attitude which led to Conan Doyle's attempt, early in the new century, to get rid of Holmes by pushing him off a cliff. Or, in any case, by having the deed done by the arch-villain, Professor Moriarty.

When this yarn appeared—Doyle called it "The Final Problem"—a public outcry of dismay and outrage swept across two continents. The untimely end of "the greatest intellect of the age" had shocked the entire world.

Letters and telegraphed messages, warm with sympathy, arrived from all quarters of the world, addressed simply to Dr. John H. Watson, 221-B Baker Street, London.

Doyle's publishers, however, and Doyle himself, were the targets for other letters, full of abuse for what had happened. In London, some individuals went into actual mourning. Men wore black on their sleeves.

"You beast!" one letter declared. Said another, "He was the finest mind of our era. England will never see his like again." And added, "You cur!"

The storm of reproach piled high. Conan Doyle's publishers stared at the stacks of letters in horror. Holmes was dead—smashed to a thousand pieces over that cliff. And how could you bring him back to life?

Luckily, Dr. Watson was still among those present. He was able to prepare for publication several early cases from his files. The public swallowed these up hungrily.

But these were not enough. They wanted Holmes alive. Explicitly alive and accounted for in the here and now. Nothing less would do.

It was the famous American editor, Mark Sullivan, whose cogent arguments reportedly finally persuaded Sir Arthur to bring the fabulous Sherlock, willy-nilly, back to life.

Once agreed upon, the miracle was effected with a minimum of disorder. The whole thing had been an error. Holmes had not fallen over the cliff at all. The evil Professor Moriarty had gone over, but Holmes had saved himself, miraculously.

Hollywood's idea of Dr. Watson and Sherlock Holmes was exemplified by actors Nigel Bruce and Basil Rathbone, and most moderns now feel they are the real thing.



Since Moriarty's gang, however, surely would seek vengeance, the simplest and wisest course had been to vanish. Incognito, he had traveled through Europe and Asia to far-off Tibet, delving into lost civilizations and problems of higher criminology.

Three years later, the occurrence of a new murder in London led him to return once again to his old haunts.

There were reports of dancing in the streets of New York and London, where the first story telling of the return of Sherlock appeared in that distant October of 1903.

The reports were not greatly exaggerated. The world welcomed Mr. Sherlock Holmes back on any terms. And for more than a quarter of a century following his return, the stories continued to pour out.

The character who wouldn't stay dead was more famous than ever. William Gillette had played him on the stage before hundreds of audiences. The deerstalker cap and the pipe were better-known fixtures than the Smith Brothers' beards.

Ultimately, Doyle's only escape was to send Holmes into retirement. In his preface to the volume entitled "His Last Bow," Dr. Watson declares:

"The friends of Mr. Sherlock Holmes will be glad to learn that he is still alive and well, though somewhat crippled by occasional attacks of rheumatism."

The statement added that Holmes was living on a small farm, on the downs "five miles from Eastbourne," and devoting himself to philosophy and agriculture.

But the fantastic career of Mr. Holmes—in retirement or out—would not end. He belonged to the world with a special global intimacy, and they were not ready to let him settle down to oblivion with his books and his bees.

WHEN Sir Arthur died, many believed that would wind up the story. But again they were premature. Anecdotes of Holmes—and of Sir Arthur as well, and his rôle in the saga—continued to be told and expanded, with increasing affection.

They liked to relate, for instance, of the time when the French school-boys were taken on an educational tour of London. Asked what they wished to see first, the boys declared unhesitatingly, "The house where Sherlock Holmes lives."

Another told of the time when Sir Arthur was in France on important service during World War I. A French general to whom Sir Arthur was presented demanded, "And what rank, sir, does Mr. Holmes hold in your Army?"

The general was obviously quite serious. Flustered, Sir Arthur replied

that Holmes was somewhat too old now for active service.

In America the Sacred Writings continued to be read by an ever-widening audience. They were performed on the radio and in the movies. The indestructible Holmes was highly active. And a few Sherlockian "scholars" began to foregather at scattered points, particularly in New York. Here a group of gentlemen, headed by Elmer Davis and Christopher Morley, began to meet regularly in a small back room of a restaurant on East 45th Street. The time was the early Thirties, and some patrons may have imagined that this mysterious group was plotting a revolution. Actually their sole purpose was to imbibe a few Scotch-and-sodas and exchange the latest gossip about their mutual friend, Mr. Holmes.

Eventually, they obtained the restaurant owner's permission to paint "221-B" on the door of the room, and even persuaded him to denote the restrooms on the second floor with signs reading "Sherlock" and "Irene." (The reference was to Irene Adler, always known to Holmes as "The Woman.")

The meaning was sufficiently clear to most of the customers.

Out of these meetings came the idea for the organization known as the Irregulars. Elmer Davis wrote the constitution, which was printed in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. The game, one might say, was afoot.

Rules of the new organization were, flexible. All persons were eligible who could pass an examination on the Sacred Writings and were otherwise deemed fit. Special meetings could be called by any one of three members, "two of whom shall constitute a quorum."

All other business, the rules specifically state, are to be left to the monthly meeting. The final rule is that there shall be no monthly meeting.

Such was the organization formed to honor Sherlock—rash, full of good humor, wit, and a boundless love of well-mannered, nonphysical, uncontemporary armchair adventure.

Their scholarship was fantastic. They produced scores of learned documents, replete with footnotes and glossaries, on the most minute details of Sherlock Holmes' life: what he ate and read, what kind of short hose he wore, his ancestry and his coat of arms.

Some of the papers concerned Dr. Watson and his remarkable marriages. Others dealt with Mrs. Hudson, the housekeeper at the Baker Street flat. The papers ran into hundreds of thousands of words. There were bibliographies of Holmes' writings on crime, concordances, gazetteers for

Sherlockian geographers, catalogues of Sherlockian characters.

Declared Christopher Morley, "Never has so much been written by so many for so few."

It was Rex Stout, however, who produced the most explosive reaction with his dissertation on the highly improbable thesis that Dr. Watson was a woman, and, in truth, Sherlock's wife.

To bolster this delightful but bizarre contention, Mr. Stout cited the statement of Watson himself (Stout says *herself*) that he fainted when Holmes returned after everyone had believed him dead.

Stout cited other instances of what might be called the womanly in Watson—or at least the slightly fussy, as further proof.

All nonsense, of course. Dr. Watson himself, it was pointed out to Stout, states that he served as a physician with the British Army in India and was wounded in combat. Further, one character in the stories refers to Watson as a solidly-built man with a mustache.

It is hardly the picture of a blushing rose.

THE story, however, broke over the front pages the following morning, and was hotly debated in cosmopolitan centers for weeks thereafter.

Foolish or sound, solid or fashioned out of nothingness, each new episode only strengthened the legend of Holmes and Watsonian reality, and spread this conviction to an ever-increasing audience.

For example, Christopher Morley's adventure with the London bobby: Morley had gone to visit Baker Street. Several blocks away, he happened to run into a police officer whose number was 220.

"If that number were one more—221—it would be quite a coincidence," Morley stated.

The bobby looked puzzled. Morley explained, "That's the number of the house where Mr. Sherlock Holmes lives."

At this the officer smiled broadly. "Of course," he said. "And what's appened to Mr. 'Olmes? We 'aven't 'eard from him lately."

Mr. Morley hurried along.

The stories came in from all over the world—even from darkest Africa. They told of one occasion where a Sherlock Holmes movie was being shown in a village on the edge of the jungle. The film was a serial, and broke off at a particularly exciting point. The audience of natives, however, demanded to see the concluding part then and there. They would not leave the detective in such peril.

Unfortunately, the last reel was still on its way to this jungle outpost, and

the natives were so informed. Infuriated, they burned down the cinema. Such was their natural feeling for the master, even in the jungles of Africa.

**M**EMBERSHIP in the Irregulars always has included, from the start, distinguished men from all walks of life. The love of Sherlock is not limited to any single profession. At one dinner, for example, some years past, messages were read from a number of individuals who could not be on hand.

One message came from Governor Thomas E. Dewey, of New York. The Governor, citing the tremendous pressure of official duties, regretfully declined with much appreciation the invitation to the dinner and to become an Irregular.

But another message, from another public official, took a different tack:

"Please tell the Baker Street Irregulars how much I wish I could be with them on January 5th. Select indeed will be this assembly of the forty *aficionados* and it would give me a real thrill to be one of their number.

"Gladly do I embrace this opportunity, *in absentia*, to send hearty greetings to the Irregulars in whose membership I am honored to be included.

"On further study I am inclined to revise my former estimate that Holmes was a founding. Actually he was born an American, and was brought up by his father or a foster-father in the underground world, thus learning all the tricks of the trade in the highly developed American art of crime.

"At an early age he felt the urge to do something for mankind. He was too well known in top circles in this country and, therefore, chose to operate in England. His attributes were primarily American, not English. I feel that further study of this postulant will bring good results to history."

Very sincerely yours,

Franklin D. Roosevelt.

F.D.R. actually was one of the Irregulars for some years, in fact as well as in spirit. At one undisclosed retreat, where the President often went, for example, the street where his Secret Service bodyguards lived was renamed "Baker Street," at the President's order.

Another distinguished Irregular is former President Harry S. Truman. In a letter to Smith, Truman declared that he had read all the Holmes novels before he was 12 years old. Some pointed out that this would have made him a mere thirty years old when he went into the White House, since the last story was not published until 1927. Others, however, noted that Mr. Truman referred specifical-

ly to the novels and not the short stories. The novels were published much earlier.

Debating the whys and wherefores of the abiding affection with which Holmes is held is like wondering why you love your wife. Holmes has many charms. Yet he is also arrogant, impatient, often downright unpleasant, and frequently overbearing.

These very traits, in fact, gave rise to one of the famous puns of modern literature, uttered by Sir Arthur's brother-in-law, E. W. Hornung, creator of *Raffles*. Declared Mr. Hornung, "Though he might be more humble, there's no police like Holmes."

One sample of Holmes' arrogance is seen in his statement on Edgar Allan Poe's detective, *Dupin*, as reported in "A Study in Scarlet." Declared Mr. Holmes grandly, "Now, in my opinion, Dupin was a very inferior fellow."

Taxed with this statement and others of similar character, Conan Doyle refused to accept any responsibility. "The creator," he insisted, "cannot be held responsible for the statements of the created."

It appears that Sir Arthur himself, even as other devotees, recognized that Mr. Holmes had an existence quite apart.

Unlike the Irregulars, the Mystery Writers of America, composed of most of the nation's top crime writers, owes first allegiance to Mr. Poe who, Holmes to the contrary notwithstanding, remains the father of the modern detective story.

But the M.W.A. also recognizes the great contributions of Holmes and is prepared to accept the reality of both Sir Arthur and his fabulous Sherlock. The organization, in fact, presented a scroll to Sir Arthur posthumously, in 1952, honoring him for his tremendous contribution in bringing the Holmes stories to the world. The wording of the scroll, however, carefully straddled the issue of whether or not the stories were actually written by Conan Doyle or by Dr. Watson.

It appears that no one has the temerity, or the ability, to stamp out the legend of the living Holmes. As one mystery writer put it, "The trouble is, if there weren't a Sherlock Holmes, we would have to invent one."

Living or dead, his legend grows. And the clubs of his followers continue to crop up. There are now some twenty-five in various parts of the country, and more in other lands, all linked by the invisible bonds of affection for a man who has become alive, as one devotee put it, out of necessity.

He is a part of the life-stream of the world. His phrases are a part of our language. His profile and cap and

pipe are known and loved throughout the world. A "Sherlock Holmes" dress was the leading design at a recent Paris exhibit of dresses by Christian Dior, France's most famous designer.

Speak of Holmes to any taxi-driver, college professor, housewife or newsboy anywhere in the world. All will know instantly who Holmes is. Most will have read one or two of the stories—or seen them in the movies—or heard them on the radio.

All will know who Watson is, and most will know that he is constantly being amazed by Holmes. This is part of the game.

Whether these characters are real or not, some won't be sure.

There are reasons for this, reasons which go beyond mere logic or factual explanations. For Holmes and Watson symbolize something deep in the human spirit.

One night, at a Baker Street dinner in New York's Murray Hill Hotel, a group of hilarious Irregulars saw coming toward them a terribly bent old man. It was, they felt, surely one of the members, made up as the Holmesian character called the "Creeping Man."

They were about to pounce on him with delight, when something stayed their hand—something Edgar Smith describes as an almost spiritual force.

Later, they learned that this man was not an Irregular at all but a long-time resident of the hotel—and badly crippled with arthritis.

**A**FRESHMAN in high school recently wrote to Edgar Smith with a serious request. He didn't know where he could obtain all the Sacred Writings. None of his friends had read the writings, the boy declared. They were all reading somebody named Spillane.

But the boy wanted Holmes.

Perhaps the most precise explanation is to be found in a statement in a book entitled "The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes," by Vincent Starrett:

"But there can be no grave for Sherlock Holmes or Watson. . . . Shall they not always live in Baker Street? Are they not there this instant, as one writes? . . . Outside, the hansoms rattle through the rain, and Moriarty plans his latest deviltry. Within, the sea-coal flames upon the hearth, and Holmes and Watson take their well-won ease. . . . So they still live for all that love them well: in a romantic chamber of the heart: in a nostalgic country of the mind: where it is always 1895."

One scarcely dares to add a phrase—fear they might be traipsing off on some desperate affair, and leaving us alone.

Plotters were everywhere in Russian-occupied Poland, and as soon as he escaped from the asylum, he'd expose them. In the meantime, he'd have to be cautious.

• By BRIAN MOORE

**T**HE HEAD ATTENDANT in charge of chronic cases hurried forward to unlock the ward door. Health Inspector Jendrek motioned to the medical superintendent and both men left the room. Almost immediately the patients regained their former apathy, slumped on their beds, lying on the floor or staring through the barred windows at the distant lights of Warsaw.

Casimir Wozniak lay down on his bed and pulled off a slipper. From its lining he extracted a small notebook and, trembling with excitement, recorded the date and the fact of the visit. Then he produced a piece of string, tied the little book under his gray beard and lay down to sleep.

Dates were an obsession with Casimir. Despite the fact there were no calendars in the wards of the Warsaw asylum, Casimir knew the date was March 6, 1953, for he had kept a record of dates ever since he had been committed to the asylum as a dangerous paranoid, back in

1932. Dates, according to Casimir's reasoning, were important. When he finally escaped from his prison he would use them in evidence against the plotters who surrounded him.

He knew that he was fifty-three years old and that he had been nearly 21 years in confinement. Yet he still faithfully recorded all events of interest which happened in his ward. Anything which he could not see for himself, he refused to believe. For, in the tortured labyrinth of Casimir's mind, he was locked away in a prison, a prison in which the inmates and guards constantly tried to deceive him by telling lies, wishful lies which revealed their evil thoughts.

Why, they had even tried to make him believe that Marshal Pilsudski, the ruler of Poland, was dead. And for a time, they had tried to make him believe that the Germans had overrun the country. And now, as a final indignity, he had heard them mutter that the official, the man called Jendrek who had just left

## Enemies of the People



the room, was a Russian agent, a Communist, and that Communists ran Poland today.

That's what they'd like to believe, Casimir thought angrily. But the whole thing was preposterous!

As Casimir tossed restlessly on his cot, his medical file was under discussion downstairs, in the offices of Professor Kaminski, the asylum's medical superintendent. Health Inspector Jendrek waved the file angrily in Kaminski's face.

"Delusions be damned," he snorted. "Face facts, man! State Mental Institution Number Six is grossly overcrowded; you're screaming for more space. Yet, when we get down to cases, you start quibbling about delusions. You've got to discharge some of these patients. Is that understood?"

**S**HADOW enveloped the professor as he turned his gaze from Jendrek. Wearily he stared at a faded photograph on the wall. With a practiced eye, he located himself, the eager young man holding the ball in the center row under the banner of Warsaw Polytechnic Football Club. Two newer photographs flanked the picture. He studied the shining skull and bland smile of the Polish premier. They said he had lost his hair in the camp at Auschwitz. The other smiling face was definitely hirsute. *He* must be in his seventies now, the professor thought, although the heavily retouched official photographs still showed the Soviet leader in the prime of life. That was the terrible thing about the newcomers. They weren't interested in facts. Facts could always be changed to suit their purposes. It was useless to argue with men like Jendrek.

"Of course, it's understood, Inspector," he said placatingly. "But the number of mental patients in all Polish institutions has increased ever since 1945. And you can't just discharge them because you have no place to keep them. The Government will have to find some other answer."

"Are you suggesting that the Government isn't handling things properly?" Inspector Jendrek asked ominously.

"Of course not. But the fact remains—"

"The fact remains that you are unwilling to discharge patients who are well enough to work. The State needs these people. Now, take this fellow." Jendrek opened the file. "Wozniak—Casimir. He's a watchmaker. Do you know that the army has just put in a request for two hundred thousand shockproof watches? We could use a man like this."

"Wozniak has improved, I admit," the professor said reminiscently. "He

hasn't mentioned his delusions for several months. But he's out of touch, you know. He's been here for over twenty years."

"Exactly!" snapped Inspector Jendrek. "The man seems perfectly fit. His general health is good."

"You can never tell in these cases, Inspector. This man was admitted suffering from definite symptoms of paranoia. As far as we know he still has them. Casimir Wozniak is a nice old fellow but he suffers from a set of systematized delusions. Perfectly normal in most things, mind you, and his intelligence has not been impaired. But he believes everyone is plotting against him. Now, I couldn't take the authority—"

"Very well," Inspector Jendrek interrupted. "I will take the authority. Discharge him at the end of the month and we'll assign him to a watchmakers' co-operative. After all, he's an old man; he won't hurt anyone. Now, let's have the next case." . . .

Twelve men were in the truck. Casimir thought it over but he could find no special reason for the number. He did, however, attach a great deal of importance to the fact that they had given him back his belt and that they had dressed him with a hat, a proper suit of clothes and heavy shoes. He had been allowed to keep his beard although his heavy gray hair had been neatly cropped. And he had even seen the head jailer before leaving. There had been good-bys and handshakes all round, but of course, he didn't pay too much attention to that sort of thing. It might be a test to see if he would break down and start talking again. It would be foolish to assume that his policy of keeping his mouth shut during the past year had succeeded in lulling their suspicions.

Still, it was an unusual experience. At first, the changing pattern of roads and streets was a bit frightening. It had been so long since he had moved outside the quiet grounds. And there were things to see, interesting things which confirmed much that he had suspected. There had been a lot of damage to the city: new buildings had sprung up and many new streets. You would almost think that Poland had been at war. But he knew better. That was a rumor spread in the prison by the plotters.

The truck rumbled loudly down a wide, handsome avenue, and in the train of Casimir's musing, memory moved him to the familiar. He peered about him, steadying his frail, spidery body on the vehicle's rattling tailgate. It was—it was the Oujas-dowska! He could see the palaces and the broad sweep of the avenue.

"Oujasdowska!" he cried triumphantly. "The finest street in Warsaw."

Nobody answered. His fellow victims stared solidly ahead. Perhaps he had been mistaken. He waited and watched. At the next street-corner he read the sign: "ALEJA STALINA."

It was to be expected, of course. The plotters were always playing tricks like this: Putting some outlandish name up on the most famous street of the capital. Somebody should tell the police about it. They'd tear it down, soon enough! Meanwhile, he would have to be careful. He was still in enemy hands.

Being careful was something Casimir had learned during his years of confinement. He said nothing as the truck crossed a new bridge over the Vistula and clattered through the industrial suburb of Praga. Meekly he stepped down outside a gray brick building and followed the guard into a room embellished with a huge portrait of a stranger with a heavy mustache and a fatherly smile. He received a set of paper books which they told him were food cards, and heard without emotion that he would be placed in a factory to work at his old trade. But the key startled him.

**KEYS**, in Casimir's world, were something the plotters kept for themselves. In his place of confinement they had been glimpsed tantalizingly in the hands of the white-coated jailers, slipped quietly in doors as the chief conspirators turned to leave the room. There had been notices everywhere concerning the keys: Warnings that doors were to be kept locked at all times; notices listing the number of keys lost by guards and warning that more care must be taken. A subterfuge, Casimir had long ago decided. No prisoner ever got possession of a key.

Yet, here he was with a key, a gleaming golden key, newly cut, a key which they said would fit the room he had been given. He put it in his pocket and tried to forget it. It was obviously a trick to make him careless. But it rubbed against his thigh as he followed one of the plotters through the streets. He had dreamed too long about keys to be able to forget this one.

It was a fine apartment building: Elevators, and a sign over the door which said, "Watchmakers' Co-operative, District Seven, Warsaw."

"Just ring that bell and report to the janitor," the guard said. Casimir rang the bell and, almost immediately, the door was opened by a big man in a leather waistcoat. Gross, powerfully built, with a flat shovel-forehead and small distrustful eyes, he looked every inch a plottor.



Casimir showed him the key. He took it, looked at it, and to Casimir's surprise, handed it back.

"Deposit your ration cards with me, old one," he grunted. "Here, you will eat in the communal canteen."

Casimir meekly handed over the little books.

"I am Szlipak," the man said. "I'm in charge here. Sign this form. It acknowledges your responsibility for the room. You are required to keep the room clean."

Casimir wrote his name.

"Where do you come from?" Szlipak asked, staring suspiciously at the signature.

"Prison."

"Just a minute, citizen," Szlipak bellowed, his small eyes suddenly bright with anger. "You seem to forget that you are being asked an official question. We don't want comedians here. Now—where do you come from?"

"Cracow," Casimir said. He had once spent a week there.

"That's better, citizen. You've got to realize your position. The revolution has a long way to go yet with fellows like you about. We don't want these capitalistic jokes here. I am the superintendent of this building. You will be responsible to me for your communal cleaning tasks. So you'd better keep your eyes right and your tongue straight. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," Casimir said. All the plotters were a bit deranged. It was wise to be civil.

"What do you mean, *sir*?" Szlipak roared, baring his misshapen teeth. "We don't stand for reactionary defiance here! *Citizen* Szlipak—that's my title."

"Yes, Citizen Szlipak," Casimir said. "I didn't understand."

"You'll have to learn quickly, then," Szlipak grunted. "Now, follow me. I'll explain your housecleaning duties later."

As they crossed the courtyard a large woman with a wart on her nose leaned out of a window.

"Hurry up," she yelled. "The grievance committee wants you."

Szlipak's immediate deference could mean only one thing; Casimir guessed correctly that the ugly woman was Szlipak's wife.

"Only a few minutes, dearest. I must show this citizen his room."

"But they want you now. Let him wait."

Casimir, seeking to ingratiate himself with this dangerous-looking female, swept off his hat and bowed to the window.

"I can well afford to wait, most gracious lady," he murmured. "Please do not let me interrupt you."

"Don't you dare to speak to me like that!" the ugly woman bellowed.

"Who is this reactionary old fool?"

"Put your hat on your head," Szlipak roared. "And watch your language. I warned you once about these capitalistic habits. I will not warn you twice. Next time, I will report the matter. And citizenship, my wife, will be my witness."

"Many pardons, citizenship."

"That's enough. Follow me. Your room is this way."

The room was pleasant and comfortable. The food served in the co-operative canteen was poor, but no more so than it had been in prison.

There was lots of work to do, although it was not of the kind Casimir had been used to. The army watches were ugly and equipped with inferior movements. But Casimir liked to work, and his skill with the mechanisms soon had him promoted to an instructor's job. His pupils, he found to his surprise, were mostly women.

The fact that the plotters used women to do man's work both enraged and delighted Casimir. It was, he decided, a measure both of their stupidity and of their evil intentions. Women should be left in the home to maintain the established order of things. And women, quite obviously, could never master the intricacies of watchmaking. So Casimir decided to take special care that the women should learn the trade according to their limited abilities. He never lost patience with his women pupils and if a girl proved really stupid, he would allow her to sit idle all day long.

Such a girl was Wanda. She was stupid, but, as Casimir noted, her looks made the foremen blind to her failings. Szlipak, who in addition to his janitor's duties, acted as security chief of the co-operative, was forever stopping beside her workbench, his small eyes covetous on her braided black hair, his lips opening wetly at the sight of her magnificent shoulders. Casimir stayed within earshot during these encounters. He made up his mind Wanda was not to be trusted.

So he was not surprised when Szlipak came to his room one night and asked him to move to the basement.

"It's a matter of personnel readjustment, citizen," Szlipak said. "I've decided to move some of the women to this floor for the greater good of the co-operative. They will be able to deal with the communal ironing duties here. Citizenship Wanda will take your room."

"But I like my room. It has a pretty view of the street."

"Selfishness, citizen, is a mark of decadent capitalists," Szlipak said softly, his small eyes agleam. "I've noticed that you show a total disregard for the communal good. Your

mind isn't in step with the times. How is the revolution ever going to succeed with people like you around? I may have to report you, citizen."

Casimir looked out the window. Somewhere, far out in the city, the Government and police were searching for these criminals. But the plot was so vast that a man could only bide his time.

"Very well," he said. "The girl can have the room. Where shall I move my things?"

"That's better. I'll show you the place. It's not bad, really. Warm in winter because it's close to the heating pipes. And the basement is always the coolest place in summer. No window, mind you, but I've fixed up a night light. You can read down there in the evenings. You might improve your mind. Remember, we'll all have to be educated when the international revolution comes. Poles must show others the light."

But Casimir did little reading; the light in his basement cell was a naked bulb which tired his eyes and the place was unbearably hot and damp. Instead, he made a plan. The whole thing, he decided, was to get his story straight. It was really simple; but he knew the Government could be stupid about seeing these things. He remembered the days, years ago, before they had shut him up. He had warned enough people then but they had all laughed at him. This time, it would be different. He would approach the matter more carefully.

He began by watching the janitor's wife. There were, it must be admitted, more pleasant things to do. For Citizenship Szlipak possessed a coarse mind in a coarse body. Ungainly, sporting her huge wart like a pressure cap on top of her fiery nose, she waddled about the corridors of the building looking for trouble. Dirt did not merely annoy her, it so enraged her that the offender shook in terror when she opened verbal fire. Pleasure, or rather the pleasure of others, produced similar thunderings. It was she who vetoed the house committee's suggestion to set up a football practice ground on the lot outside the building. It was she who brought fines and recriminations down on offenders who placed flower-boxes in their windows. Revolution, for Citizenship Szlipak, was the antithesis of pleasure. Anything she disliked was bourgeois, and anything bourgeois she denounced.

Within a week, Casimir had filled a notebook with her habits and opinions. Then, with the care of a general preparing an offensive, he began to study her husband.

Szlipak, he decided, was the most careless plotter he had ever met. The

man was openly dangerous, mouthing politically radical talk and dreadful threats against the country. And he was lazy; Casimir discovered that his janitorial duties were negligible, for everything was done by the members of the co-operative. He was forever in the kitchens, wandering out with tidbits hidden in his capacious pockets. And he plotted incessantly; Casimir noticed that each evening he met secretly with Citizeness Wanda in the boiler-room and he heard them laughing and whispering long into the night.

Casimir liked walking. In the evening when he was not watching Szlipak, he began a long series of walks, often crossing the Vistula into Warsaw proper. The city was almost unrecognizable. Street names, familiar to him since his childhood, had disappeared and were replaced by others bearing the names of generals which he could hardly pronounce. The old restaurants were gone and the public buildings lay in semi-ruin.

Sometimes he went into small *kawiarnias* for coffee and a piece of tort. He was fond of tort, especially the three-layer kind, full of cream and rum. But these things had become terribly expensive. And the vodka, now being sold by the State monopoly, was of inferior quality. It was stuff for soldiers, those busy young soldiers, marching about the city, always singing, bearing strange guns with saucer-shaped clips on the stock.

Casimir's journeys through the city were not aimless. He was looking for police headquarters. In his visits to the *kawiarnias*, he would occasionally ask people for the address, taking a chance that they would not be plotters. But their frightened glances told him the worst. The police had reason to be careful, he decided—there were so many enemies who hung their heads in silence at the mere mention of their name.

THE odd thing was that he never saw a policeman. Soldiers directed traffic, checked up on accidents and seemed to run the city. Perhaps the Government had declared a state of emergency and the army had taken over. Casimir decided that if this were the case, no time must be lost. After a month of watching Szlipak, he was ready.

On his next walk into Warsaw, he stopped an infantry officer and asked him if the army had assumed police duties.

The officer, a burly fellow who didn't look in the least like a gentleman, laughed in his face.

"Nonsense, Grandfather," he said. "Haven't you caught up with the times? The People's Security Police runs the army. They're the bosses."



When he couldn't find a policeman, he finally stopped an infantry officer, who laughed at him until he asked, "Where is police headquarters?" Then the officer grew quite pale.

"I'm delighted to hear that, Mr. Officer," said Casimir. "And where is the headquarters of the People's Security Police?"

"It's on Hoza Street," the officer said, looking distrustfully at Casimir. "What do you want with them?"

"I have some things to tell them. About enemies, enemies of the state, enemies of the people."

The officer grew quite pale. "Hold on now, old one. I was only joking—about the army, I mean. I have the highest respect for the People's Security Police."

"Many pardons, Mr. Officer. I don't understand."

"Don't try to frighten me," the officer said in a shaky voice. "I mean—I mean I didn't mean that the People's Security Police runs the army. I was only joking, see? You wouldn't report a man for a thing like that."

Casimir stiffened. Just as he had suspected, the fellow was probably a plotter masquerading in army uniform. Hoza Street. . . . Well, the fellow was probably lying. Still, it was worth a try.

The building was on Hoza Street, all right. It said *People's Security Police* over the door and two soldiers

with rifles stood on guard in the main entrance. Casimir reflected that the people had need of such protection. He doubted if even the police realized the extent of the danger which now surrounded Poland.

A COLORLESS woman, wearing steel-rimmed glasses, looked up as he approached the information desk.

"State your business, citizen," she said.

"It's confidential. I would like to see the Chief of Police."

"All our business is confidential," the woman said, grinning. "And the Chief of Police is very busy. Is it a complaint?"

Casimir looked cautiously around the hallway. Then he bent his head and put his lips close to the woman's ear.

"It's about subversive elements in Watchmakers' Co-operative Seven," he hissed. "A plot against the Government."

"So?" The woman looked unimpressed. "Any sabotage?"

"Of course, of course," Casimir said testily. "Naturally there is sabotage."

"Wait over there," the woman said, picking up a telephone.

A few minutes later, Casimir was led into a small room, furnished only with a wooden table and two benches. A police officer with iron-gray hair and a scowling face sat under a naked light bulb. Behind him, half-hidden in the shadows, a small professorial man in a gray suit paced up and down, puffing a pipe.

"Your name?" the officer said.

"Casimir Wozniak."

"Party affiliation?"

"I have never officially joined a political party but I have spent my life—"

"All right, all right. I didn't ask for your life-story," the officer snapped. "Now, what about this sabotage plot?"

**W**OZNIAK took a deep breath. He must be concise, official. That was the way policemen liked things to be.

"It's about a man called Szlipak—janitor at Watchmakers' Co-operative Seven, over in Praga," he said. "In conversations which I have had with him over the past month he has repeatedly offered dangerous opinions. He has advocated the overthrow of the established order. He has arranged his duties so that they are done by other members of the co-operative. This leaves him more time for his attempts to corrupt honest men like myself. He holds secret meetings in the cellar, with a citizenship named Wanda. I have a record of these occasions."

"Now, wait a minute," the officer said. "How do you know they have meetings? What do they talk about?"

"I tell you, I've kept a watch on them," Casimir said heatedly. "I don't know what they talk about. But I do know that Szlipak told me the working people must take things in their own hands. When I told him these were matters for the authorities, he laughed and said I was behind the times. He said we'd see some big changes in the next few years."

"What sort of changes?"

"Well, he said an international movement of workers will arise and sweep away those in power. That we must wait a few years and then the great revolution will begin."

"That's enough," the civilian said softly. "Wait outside."

"But I've got a lot more to tell you," Casimir stammered. "I said I've been watching this fellow."

"Wait outside!"

When Casimir had gone, the officer opened a dossier.

"Szlipak is the security agent of the co-operative, comrade commander," he said. "He joined the Party in 1945."

The little man removed his pipe from his lips and picked up the file. "Another opportunist who jumped on the bandwagon," he said. "The Party will have to do a lot of weeding

out. Of course, this may not be as dangerous as the old man thinks. Szlipak may be one of those eager comrades who gets his speeches mixed up."

"Then we'll drop the matter, comrade commander?"

"Nonsense. The old fool seemed quite sincere. We'll have to investigate. Thank him for coming and put him on our information list. If we have to get rid of Szlipak, we might be able to use him instead."

"But we've got nothing to go on, comrade commander!" the police officer protested.

"That's the trouble with you, Kuchinski," the little man snapped. "You're prepared to wait until you have a full counter-revolutionary plot on your hands before you do anything about it. You heard that remark about the international movement? What sort of movement is it? Isn't that enough for you? Now, put a watch on that basement tonight. And find out if Szlipak is married. We may get something from his wife. Vigilance, Kuchinski, vigilance! We must stamp out these plots."

**C**ASIMIR enjoyed the raid. It was carried out with the precision and skill to be expected of the People's Security Police. Four police agents were concealed in the boiler-room. They pounced as soon as Szlipak and Wanda entered the door. At the same moment, armed guards appeared on all floors of the building and the members of the co-operative were warned to remain in their rooms. Officer Kuchinski, in command of the raid, ordered Citizeness Szlipak routed from her bed. She stood tearfully in a corner, wiping her eyes with the edge of her red-flannel nightgown, when Szlipak and Wanda were dragged up from the basement.

"Now," said Kuchinski. "Let's get to the bottom of this. Citizeness Szlipak, your husband is charged with sabotage and subversive propaganda—and we have evidence that he is a member of an international movement which is trying to overthrow the government. You're a Party member, citizeness. It's your duty to tell us the truth."

"What's that woman doing here?" Citizeness Szlipak shrieked, pointing a quivering finger at Wanda.

"Furthermore, we have evidence that your husband has been holding secret conferences with this woman in the boiler-room of this building. Our men seized them there, not fifteen minutes ago. We have reason to suspect they were plotting sabotage against the State."

"On my honor—" Szlipak blubbered.

"Shut up!" snapped Kuchinski.

"It's true!" Citizeness Szlipak yelled, her huge wart shaking in anger. "That woman has corrupted him. She's a bourgeois counter-revolutionary. She has implicated my husband."

At the mention of the dread word *counter-revolutionary*, Officer Kuchinski paled.

"Why didn't you report this?" he shouted.

"My husband! Oh, my husband, how could—"

"Silence! The State is more important than your husband. You deliberately concealed counter-revolutionary activity."

"It's not true, comrade officer," Szlipak whined. "I am a loyal Party member."

"Then what were you doing in the cellar? And what does your wife mean?"

Szlipak looked at his wife. Her eyes were bright with dreadful rage. Sullenly, he shrugged his shoulders.

"Please, officer," Citizeness Wanda sobbed, her magnificent shoulders heaving.

"Silence! You are all under arrest. Take them down to headquarters. And get some reserves up here. I want an immediate search of the premises."

Cautiously, Casimir concealed himself in a doorway as the protesting trio were bundled into a closed car. He had barely time to slip back to his room before there was a knock on the door. It was Officer Kuchinski.

"Well, Wozniak," he said, seating himself on Casimir's bed. "I'm afraid you were right. It's quite serious."

Casimir nodded eagerly. For the first time in twenty years an official had seen his point. But even in this moment of triumph, he was cautious.

"**T**HAT'S not the last of these plots," he said sagely, nodding his head. "This thing is quite widespread, you know. And they may make reprisals against me."

"Now, you don't have to worry about that," Officer Kuchinski said reassuringly. "A man who keeps his eyes and ears open can be very valuable to us. That is, as long as nobody knows he's working for us. I'll arrange to keep you out of this affair. Szlipak's wife will testify. We'll see to that."

"Thank you, officer."

"Don't thank me. I should thank you. In fact, I'm going to make you our agent for this co-operative. Extra pay, you know, and all you have to do is tell us if you hear anything. Vigilance, Wozniak, vigilance! We must stamp out these plots."

Casimir smiled gently. "Yes, yes, it's only a beginning," he murmured with a far-away look in his eyes. "I have a lot of work to do. The enemies of the people are everywhere." •

# The Stronger Medicine

There was more at stake than just thirty ponies and the necklace. There was Thin Skunk's reputation as the greatest of all medicine-men. And the happiness of Black Wolf and Little Doe.

By FRANK O'ROURKE

**T**HIN SKUNK SAT IN HIS TIFI and scowled at the sun-warmed outer world; in the sweetest time of the year, he was choked with defeat and anger. While his people grew fat upon the Great White Father's bounty, he, the greatest medicine-man of the Cheyennes, had become a laughingstock. His finger necklace was lost forever, in the possession of General Crook's Ink Man, Adjutant General Mini-hoa, who made strong medicine at the agency with the box whose wheels went *whir-r-whir-r-r*.

His daughter worked outside the tipi door, sewing on a choice deerhide, casting worried looks in his direction. Little Doe was slender and soft-eyed, a gentle girl of sixteen summers, his last child and his favorite. But today even she hesitated to enter the tipi and console him. His wife had gone to the river, his friends were suddenly busy far afield—for all knew the story of yesterday.

He had visited the agency yesterday, nagged by the squaws until he went to challenge the medicine-box. The scene was still too clear and painful for comfort. He had pushed through the circle of young people and looked upon the box, the wires, the pail of water. On the pail bottom was a silver dollar, shining brightly in the sunlight. Thin Skunk had laughed inwardly at such harmless medicine, and grunted his scorn.

"You call this medicine?" he asked.

"Observe the dollar?" Mini-hoa said.

Thin Skunk said, "I see the dollar."

"Take a wire in one hand," Mini-hoa said. "Then lift the dollar from the pail."

"I cannot do that?" Thin Skunk asked.

"You cannot," Mini-hoa asserted; "for my medicine is stronger."

The muted laughter tinkled behind Thin Skunk, his own people saying without words that Mini-hoa was the greatest medicine-man. Lesser medicine-men of the Sioux, the Dakota, and Arapahoe had come here to match their strength with Mini-hoa's, and failed to lift the dollar. Now his own people





compared those men with Thin Skunk, the greatest of all medicine-men. Thin Skunk plucked a length of grass just peeping above the earth, rolled it in his palms, and placed it in his mouth. He looked at the sun, the cardinal points, and hummed a few verses from his medicine song.

"Well," Mini-hoa said. "Will you lift the dollar, Thin Skunk?"

"I will," Thin Skunk said.

Still he waited, thinking now of his finger necklace. Made of fingers captured from the bravest enemies in bygone years, it was the strongest medicine known to the Cheyennes. But Captain Burke—Mini-hoa—had taken it from Thin Skunk in last year's final battle, and no amount of pleading and offered rewards had persuaded Mini-hoa to part with the prize.

"Well?" Mini-hoa said.

Thin Skunk said innocently, "I would wager."

"Name your bet."

"My necklace," Thin Skunk said, "against ten ponies."

A sharp sigh rose from the silent circle. Mini-hoa's brows drew together in deep consideration; then his smooth-shaven face spread in a respectful smile. He could not refuse the wager, for Thin Skunk had the privilege of naming the prizes, and to withhold the fabled necklace was admitting weakness.

"The necklace," Mini-hoa agreed, "against ten ponies. Are you ready, Thin Skunk?"

"I am ready."

"Then grasp the wire," Mini-hoa said, "and lift the dollar."

"The necklace," Thin Skunk said, "to be paid at once, Mini-hoa?"

Mini-hoa smiled. "At once—if you win."

THIN SKUNK accepted the wire, which brought no apparent evil to his fingers. He chanted a medicine song, and Mini-hoa began turning the crank on the box and singing his own medicine song in which the words "Pat Malloy" were repeated many times. Thin Skunk chanted louder, certain that he was the stronger, and pushed his right arm boldly into the pail.

He was seized by some unknown spirit that lanced his body with bolts of lightning. He tried to drop the wire, to withdraw his arm from the pail, and could accomplish neither task. His body was helpless, his fingers bent backward toward his wrists, his mind inflamed and stripped of all cool thought; and within one hideous moment he was screaming like a child, kicking and whimpering in the grasp of a nightmare.

"I am stronger?" Mini-hoa asked.

"No," Thin Skunk wailed. "Never! Never!"

Mini-hoa cranked faster. Thin Skunk twisted and writhed and screamed, bent over the pail in the fashion of a squaw picking berries. He could not reach the dollar, nor could he withdraw, and his body was rapidly turning numb.

"I am stronger?" Mini-hoa asked again.

Thin Skunk managed a nod and an agonized groan of surrender. Mini-hoa ceased cranking, jerked the wire away, and the terrible lightning vanished at once. Thin Skunk backed from the pail amid the growing laughter of his own people who pressed upon him from all sides. He backed through the circle toward his pony, wishing only to ride away.

"Do not forget," Mini-hoa called. "Ten ponies!"

"Ten ponies," Thin Skunk croaked agreement.

HE rode from the agency, head down, knowing that his people no longer would trust his medicine. No longer the trusted one, Old-man-with-the-necklace, who drove away evil and brought good to all. He was broken by stronger medicine, and Mini-hoa had retained the necklace, plus the ten ponies which must be paid. And today he was an old man skulking in his tipi, awaiting nightfall to show his face and walk freely on the earth.

Thin Skunk relived the painful scene a dozen times before afternoon passed into dusk and cool night had touched the land. Wrinkled above the eyes, leathery folds descended from his lean cheeks to the sagging wattles of his thin, sharp jaw and ancient, creased neck; his eyes, deep black, glittered beneath the shaggy brows, and his mouth was a mobile and trained instrument that pictured all emotions, and boasted a full set of strong yellow teeth. He was skinny and pot-bellied, spindly-shanked and big-footed, yet he had always walked with dignity and contained the wisdom of his people.

No one knew his age, for no one remembered, but he admitted secretly to seventy-eight summers. He had grown and lived through the fine, forgotten times when buffalo covered the earth and provided his people with every essential of life. He had known the first white men who came for beaver, witnessed the passage of the countless battles and famines and feasts. And always, in his heart that was never soft but guided by his shrewd mind, Thin Skunk had worked for the good of his people. Never a chief, his talent had bent early to medicine, but he sat on the right hand of chiefs in council, and his advice was always employed.

Illustration by HOWARD WILLIAMSON

It was not the box, the big medicine, that worried him tonight. He was too shrewd to imagine that Mini-hoa worked that medicine against him alone. Captain Burke was not a cruel man who used the medicine to shame or hurt. Mini-hoa was a fair man with a straight tongue, with a love of what his kind called "fun." The box was a means of pleasure for Mini-hoa, yet Mini-hoa was foremost a soldier, intent on keeping the Indians happy, off the warpath and on the new reservation. Thin Skunk understood well that Mini-hoa was discrediting all medicine-men so that, in the future, one bad medicine-man could not lead his people into another foolish, useless war.

And yet, Thin Skunk pondered, in all truth Mini-hoa had misjudged him. He wanted only peace for the Cheyennes, and he needed all his medicine to help enforce such peace, and aid the chiefs in holding their people on the reservation. But Mini-hoa had shamed him deliberately, had kept his finger necklace, and had stripped him of much power to do good. Not to mention the loss of ten ponies. Thin Skunk thought calmly as night approached, for only through calmness would he discover the true path of revenge.

His wife came from the river to cook their meal, and Little Doe brought food to him within the tipi. She paused a moment at his side and he felt her fingers brush his shoulder.

"You are well, Father?" she asked timidly.

"I will survive the night," Thin Skunk said testily.

Little Doe said, "I believe in you, Father."

Thin Skunk looked up and patted her hand. "That is good. One believer may become an army in bad times."

SHE smiled and left the tipi, and Thin Skunk ate with better humor. He was smoking, and thinking, when a pony stopped behind the tipi and familiar steps thudded on the earth. His daughter's favorite suitor had arrived.

"Welcome, Black Wolf," Thin Skunk said gravely.

Black Wolf came from the darkness and sat facing Thin Skunk in the firelight. He was a huge young man, black-haired and powerful beyond his own understanding, yet gentle and unassuming. Black Wolf was a great fool in the head when it came to matters of state, but he was brave and kind, and unafraid of the hardest toil. He was perpetually impoverished, for his heart was foolishly generous, and his judgment equally faulty. He gave his last blanket to the veriest liar, cut wood for old people, loaned his best

ponies to worthless young braves. Little Doe favored him; but a man must pay for a lovely maiden, and Black Wolf could not accumulate sufficient ponies.

"You are sad?" Black Wolf said, with his usual lack of tact.

"Angry," Thin Skunk said, forgiving him for this breach of ethics, understanding his kind heart. "Angry, Black Wolf."

"That box," Black Wolf said. "It is great medicine, Thin Skunk."

"It is," Thin Skunk admitted.

**B**LACK WOLF frowned in thought as words tumbled willy-nilly in his mind. "I saw it work last week. It is lightning, is it not?"

"Of some form," agreed Thin Skunk. "And very powerful."

"We do not fear lightning," Black Wolf said. "You will find a stronger medicine, Thin Skunk. I believe in you."

"You are my friend," Thin Skunk said. "A man discovers true friends in such a time."

"I would help," Black Wolf said, "if I knew what to do. But I am poor, and stupid; I cannot gather ponies enough, and Little Doe will not wait forever."

Thin Skunk said absently, "The ponies will come. Have patience. What else have you heard about Mini-hoa's box?"

Expecting nothing, he was surprised, then awakened in every aching joint, as Black Wolf said haltingly, "Only gossip, Thin Skunk. Well, I did talk with old Dirty Neck the other day. We spoke of the medicine box and Dirty Neck drew many strange pictures on the ground, and spoke many strange words, telling me what was in the box and how no one could lift the dollar while Mini-hoa cranked his medicine from the box into the wire and the water."

Thin Skunk drew more deeply into his mask of calmness, but his mind was now working with fresh hope. Dirty Neck was the old half-breed, nearly his own age, who had trapped for many seasons in their land, and of late had scouted for General Crook. Dirty Neck knew a great deal about everything, and spoke with a straight tongue to those he trusted. Dirty Neck and Thin Skunk were friends of thirty summers, and Black Wolf was also a friend.

"What did he call the medicine?" Thin Skunk asked.

"I cannot say the word," Black Wolf admitted. "It has no meaning in our tongue. Dirty Neck said it was like the lightning, that Mini-hoa cranked it from the box into the wire and the water."

"Is there no way to overcome it?" Thin Skunk said.

"I cannot say it," Black Wolf said in shamed tones. "Dirty Neck talked and talked, but I could not understand."

"But there is a way?"

"Oh, yes," Black Wolf said. "But it is more white medicine and not ours."

Thin Skunk rose suddenly and rubbed both hands across his belly. "How many ponies have you now?"

"Six," Black Wolf said.

"You must gather twenty," Thin Skunk said sternly. "That is a small price for my daughter, but you are my friend."

"I know," Black Wolf said miserably. "I will try."

"Listen to me," Thin Skunk said. "Come to my tipi at dawn tomorrow. And tell no one of our talk tonight. I must go now and strengthen my medicine."

Black Wolf smiled hopefully. "You will challenge Mini-hoa again?"

"I will," Thin Skunk said firmly, "and it is possible that you can assist, and by assisting you may have twenty ponies for Little Doe."

**G**ossip ran like fire in the village that morning. Thin Skunk had ridden into the night and returned only when the sun rose, to speak with Black Wolf and dispatch that warrior on a secret errand. Thereafter, Thin Skunk had remained within his tipi, plainly making medicine of strange and unknown substances. Odd smells came from the tipi, Thin Skunk chanted many verses of his most powerful medicine songs, and no one was allowed near until Black Wolf rode up at sunset and entered the tipi.

"You saw Mini-hoa?" Thin Skunk asked.

"We spoke," Black Wolf said. "He accepted your challenge for tomorrow."

"Good," Thin Skunk said. "Now sit; I have words for you."

Black Wolf crouched beside the tiny fire and instinctively warmed his hands. Little Doe was just outside and he wished mightily to see her. He smelled an odd, sharp odor that had no cousin in his memory, and then Thin Skunk spoke.

"Tomorrow you will be my assistant. I am teaching you my secrets. You will attempt to lift the dollar from the pail—"

"Me!" Black Wolf said. "But I have no medicine."

"I will provide the medicine," Thin Skunk said curtly. "Are you afraid? Do you wish to go hunting?"

"No," Black Wolf said. "No, I am not afraid. I will do as you say, Thin Skunk, but I am very stupid."

"You are strong," Thin Skunk said. "Listen to me, be unafraid, and you shall have twenty ponies by nightfall."



"Good afternoon, miss—I'm with the Fire Department."

"I will obey," Black Wolf said quietly; but he was puzzled.

"I will speak," Thin Skunk said. "You will take the wire and reach for the dollar. Now we know how the medicine will seize you. But you are strong, and brave. You will not lift the dollar, understand me, no matter if you discover your strength is equal to the task. What you must do is this—kick and dance and swing your arms. If possible, kick the box with all your strength, once, twice, or many times. Roll upon the ground and shout loudly, and kick always at the box. You will not take the dollar, for that is part of my medicine. When you have accomplished this, I will take your place. Now, you will sleep here, and we shall ride at dawn."

"Kick," Black Wolf repeated to himself. "Shout and wave my arms and kick at the box . . . twenty ponies . . . I will be brave."

Then, Thin Skunk having closed his eyes and apparently dropped into slumber, Black Wolf left the tipi and crouched beside the cooking fire. He gazed soberly at Little Doe, who re-

turned his look and offered him food. Her mother crossed to the adjoining tipi, and Little Doe whispered, "You will have the ponies soon?"

"Very soon," Black Wolf said. "Your father is a great man. His new medicine must be the strongest of all, to challenge lightning."

"They are talking," Little Doe said, motioning with one arm. "Everyone will visit the agency tomorrow. It will be a great day."

"It must be," Black Wolf said. "It must."

NEVER had such a crowd surrounded the front of headquarters at the agency. All business of the day was postponed and Captain Burke faced the largest audience of his career. His fellow officers had contributed five additional dollars as an extra prize, and many eyes gazed covetously upon that stack, then studied the box with frowns of anger. Lieutenant Crosby turned to Burke as Thin Skunk rode into the yard.

"He's got nerve, coming back for a second try."

"He has to," Burke said. "He's disgraced now; he has lost face and must get it back."

"But how?"

"He's tricky," Captain Burke said. "And he wants his necklace above all."

"Then you think he has a chance?"

"Not a smidgeon," Captain Burke chuckled. "I'll give him a shock today he'll never forget."

Through the close-packed throng came Thin Skunk, trailed by a huge young warrior recognized as Black Wolf, his prospective son-in-law, long on muscle and short on brain. The laughter tinkled again, but Thin Skunk ignored his people grandly and approached until he stood directly before the pail of water, facing Mini-ho-

wa. "Welcome, great chief," Mini-ho-

wa said. "You sent a challenge?"

"I did," Thin Skunk said gravely. "Is your medicine still strong?"

"Stronger than before," Mini-ho-

wa said. "See, we have added five dollars to whoever lifts the dollar from the pail."

"And you will wager?" Thin Skunk asked.

"Anything you wish."

"Were the ponies fat?" Thin Skunk asked.

Mini-ho-

wa nodded. "You paid fairly, Thin Skunk. The ponies are fat. You wish to wager more?"

"Ten more ponies," Thin Skunk said, "against the ten you now have."

Mini-ho-

wa smiled. "And the necklace, what of that?"

"Ten more against the necklace," Thin Skunk said calmly.

"Very well," Mini-ho-

wa said. "And more?"

"Yes," Thin Skunk said. "And ten more against ten more ponies?"

Mini-ho-

wa studied him carefully, then replied, "You are foolish, Thin Skunk, but it is a bet. Are you ready?"

"No," Thin Skunk said. "I am teaching my medicine to my friend, Black Wolf. Before I test your medicine, he would lift the dollar from the pail."

Mini-ho-

wa turned and regarded Black Wolf, who squirmed uncomfortably but stood his ground and gazed wide-eyed at the box. Mini-ho-

wa allowed the trace of a smile to touch his lips before saying, "Black Wolf may test the medicine. Are you ready, Black Wolf?"

"I am ready," Black Wolf said, in a tiny voice for one so large.

"Then lift the dollar," Mini-ho-



Mini-ho-wa studied him carefully. "You are foolish, Thin Skunk, but it is a bet. Are you ready?" Thin Skunk indicated Black Wolf, who squirmed uncomfortably but stood his ground. "No," Thin Skunk said. "I am teaching my medicine to Black Wolf. He will begin."



roared with pain, he kicked like a mule and rolled on the ground, his eyes bulging, sweat pouring from his body. He gave the box a tremendous kick with one massive foot, knocked the crank from Mini-hoa's hand and sent the box spinning along the ground. For a moment his eyes opened with surprise, and his arm dipped farther into the pail, but Thin Skunk was chanting his medicine all the while and at this point lifted his voice sharply. Black Wolf seemed to grow rigid once more, then fell back, dropping the wire and pulling his arm from the pail, even as Mini-hoa recaptured the crank and began cranking again. Mini-hoa looked worried, as Thin Skunk ceased his song and came forward.

"The medicine is strong?" he asked. "Too strong," Black Wolf said hoarsely. "Too strong, Thin Skunk." "I will lift the dollar," Thin Skunk said.

Mini-hoa and his friends were gathered about the box, doing strange things to its insides, and Mini-hoa held up one arm and said:

"Black Wolf is very strong. He has fought my medicine with great courage. You would not wish to challenge my medicine until I have time to recover, would you?"

"No," Thin Skunk said agreeably. "I wish your medicine to be at its strongest, Mini-hoa. For I will lift the dollar."

MINI-HOA looked closely at Thin Skunk, studying him from head to foot with suspicious eyes. Thin Skunk was not changed from two days past—wearing the same trousers and shirt and moccasins and blanket; only after two days he was plainly unwashed, as befitted a great medicine-man about to extend his strength to the utmost. His face was dirty, his hands and arms caked with dirt, fingers black and curled like vulture talons. While Mini-hoa and his friends injected more strength into the box, Thin Skunk began his medicine song and further, stepping back, showed his people that today was the supreme test of all his powers.

He lay upon the ground and placed the hot bowl of his pipe within his mouth, and caused smoke to pour forth or draw within and trickle from his nose. He grunted and groaned, and closed his eyes tightly, and soon the grunts emitted from his stomach for all to hear. Mini-hoa looked around and smiled, knowing very well that Thin Skunk numbered ventriloquism among his talents. Thin Skunk spoke with the spirits for many minutes, then opened his eyes and glared at the circle of faces.

He exhibited a small piece of tobacco and swallowed it, then opened

his ragged, dirty shirt and became deathly sick. His face beneath the dirt turned gray, more grunts issued from his stomach, and just as Mini-hoa turned with the box, fully restored with medicine, Thin Skunk reached down along his starkly outlined ribs and withdrew the piece of tobacco from under the last rib. His people groaned softly, for he did this only upon great occasions, and already some drew back in fear, for Thin Skunk was not one to forget laughter.

"Well," Mini-hoa said. "Are you ready, Thin Skunk?"

Thin Skunk rose slowly to his feet and stepped forward. He said, "Your medicine is strong again, Mini-hoa?"

"Stronger," Mini-hoa said, and one of the officers behind him grunted and made a sign across his chest, with one finger, one way, then another. Mini-hoa gave that officer a harsh stare and repeated, "Stronger, Thin Skunk."

"Ten ponies," Thin Skunk said, "against ten ponies?"

"Yes."

"And ten against the necklace?"

"Yes."

"And ten against ten more ponies?" Thin Skunk said.

"That is our wager," Mini-hoa said. "Lift the dollar, Thin Skunk?"

Thin Skunk turned and looked upon his people for the space of ten long, silent breaths. In his eyes was anger and compassion, and a glint of retribution yet to come. No more did laughter tinkle, but as he wheeled solemnly and took the wire in his left hand, a thin sigh arose and hung like mist in the sun-heated air.

Thin Skunk held the wire and watched Mini-hoa crank, and crank faster, faster than ever before, and then reached his right arm casually into the pail and lifted the dollar into full view, high in the air. A roar of surprise went up, and Mini-hoa jumped from the box and stood close beside Thin Skunk, jerking the wire away and looking closely at Thin Skunk's face and hands and arms. Black Wolf released a pent-up shout of triumph, and Mini-hoa said in awed tones:

"I'll be double-damned!"

"I have lifted the dollar," Thin Skunk said calmly. "The wager is mine?"

"You win," Mini-hoa said regretfully. "And I'd like to know who—but never mind. About the necklace now—"

Captain Burke had been placed in a delicate position. The finger necklace, one of few in the entire world, had been sent months ago to the National Museum in Washington. Captain Burke was visualizing the replies from his commanding general when he requested that necklace, because he

had been tricked and a brawny young warrior had kicked half the electricity from the old hospital generator. But not all, he knew, and that puzzle was plain on his face.

"No," Thin Skunk said. "I will take the ponies, Mini-hoa. You keep the necklace, and give in its place another twenty ponies."

"I—" Mini-hoa said.

"It is best," Thin Skunk said gravely. "The necklace was for war. We are at peace. You may hold the necklace for my people, as I will hold your ponies, which will have other ponies and thus continue the gift of your people. Is it agreed?"

"It is, yes," Mini-hoa said quickly. "Twenty ponies for the necklace, Thin Skunk."

"I am the stronger?" Thin Skunk asked, his voice rising.

Mini-hoa had the grace to smile; he said loudly, "Your medicine is the stronger. You are the greatest medicine-man, Thin Skunk." Beneath his breath Mini-hoa added, "And the cleverest, you old goat! I wonder how you figured it out?"

A cold is both positive and negative; sometimes the Eyes have it and sometimes the Nose.

—William Lyon Phelps

Thin Skunk turned and walked majestically through the quickly opened path, to his horse. There was ample time to consider suitable punishment for unbelievers, but right now he wished only to return home and wash himself. With Black Wolf riding proudly at his side, he left the agency and trotted up the trail.

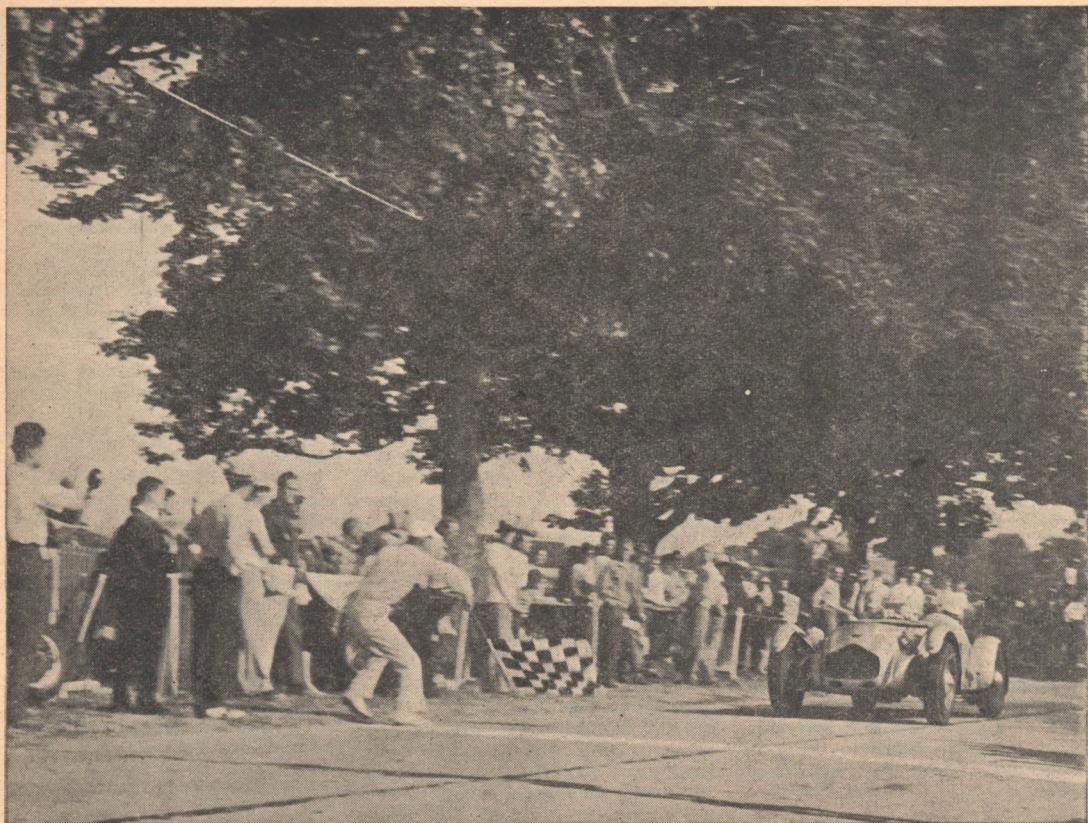
"I did well?" Black Wolf asked.

"You did," Thin Skunk said. "I will loan you twenty ponies. You will tie them at my door, for Little Doe. And"—his voice became stern—"you will repay me in due time for such an irregular procedure."

"I will," Black Wolf said excitedly. "I will, Father-in-law. But how—"

"Medicine," Thin Skunk said benignly. "The medicine of many years. And I have much stronger medicine not yet used."

Riding in the sweetest time of year, savoring the smell of fresh grass and flowers and the sun-warmed air, he thought it unnecessary to tell Black Wolf—or anyone, for that matter—of his visit to the cabin of Dirty Neck two nights ago. Dirty Neck had explained about the lightning, how a strong kick would weaken the box; then had melted an old Army raincoat in a pot, and smeared the cooling rubber over Thin Skunk's left hand. •



Tommy Cole, driving a Cadillac-Allard, flashes across the finish line in first place at the Bridgehampton, L.I., road races in June, 1951.

# sports aren't for

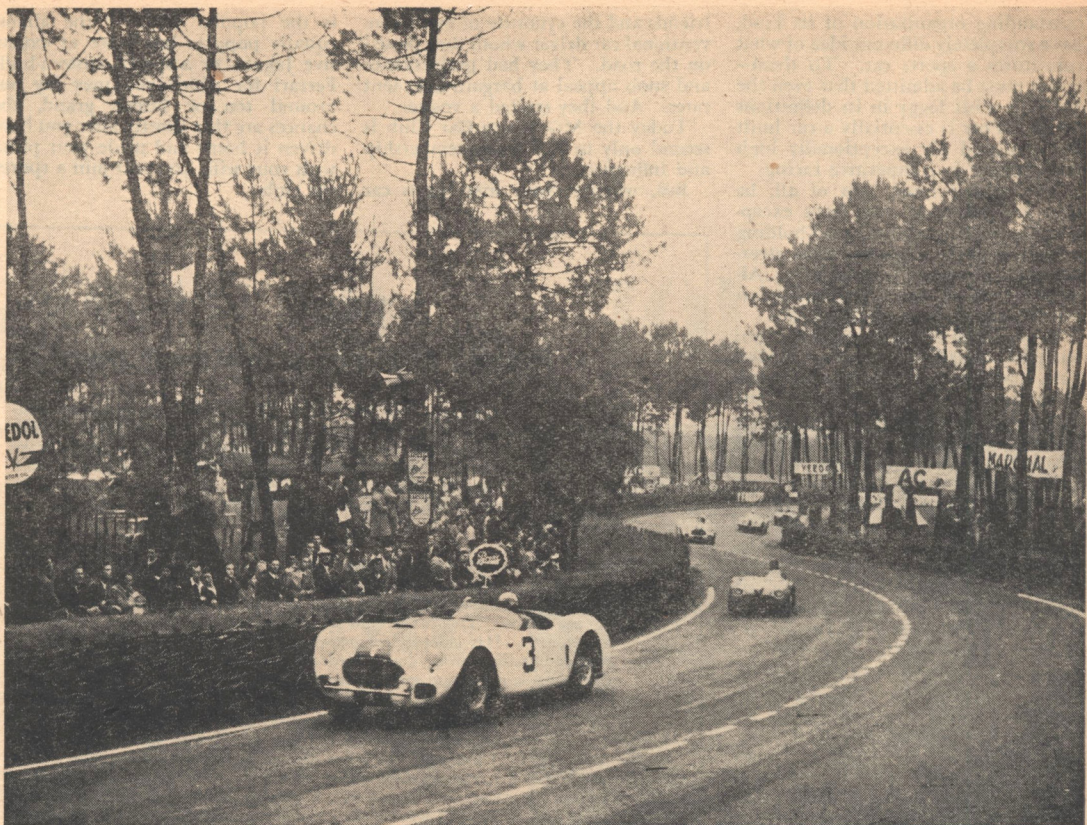
By **LIONEL WHITE**

**Roaring at 90 miles an hour through  
country lanes takes stamina  
and guts—and skill. Which is why  
Americans are turning by the  
thousands to this thrilling sport.**

**S**OME QUIET SUNDAY THIS SUMMER, you're going to be tooling along in the old family sedan at a sedate forty miles an hour, when a sound like a jet plane hedgehopping will be heard just behind your left ear. A moment later, as you shudder slightly and pull well over to the right, a series of small, beautifully-chromed and enameled bugs will roar past.

If you're one of the two to three million persons in the country who are initiated, you'll know right away that these upper-case hot-rods are nothing more than the local sports-car club, en route to one of the numerous road races or hill climbs which, within the last few years, have become America's freshest and most popular spectator-participant sporting events.

Sports cars—and the road races for which they are essentially designed—are not a new thing. In fact, the entire automobile industry got its original impetus from them.



Mecca for sports-car fans is the LeMans Grand Prix, held annually on the rugged roads of France. *Below, John Fitch, top American driver.*

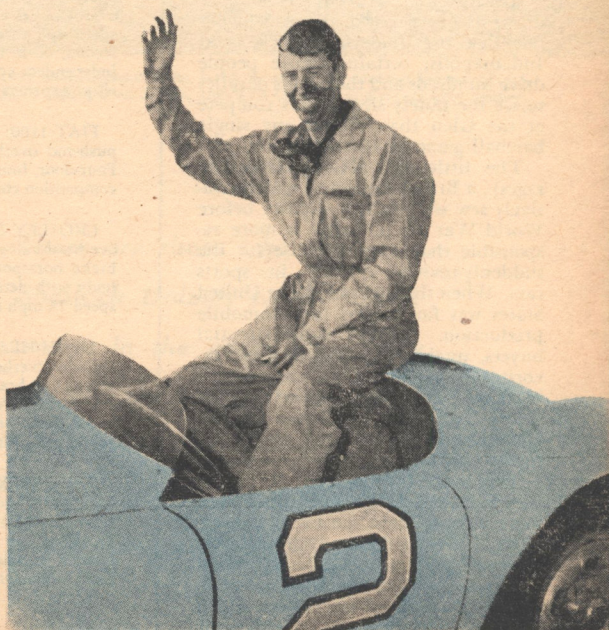
# sissies!

But with the exception of the possible twenty thousand persons who now own sports cars, or the million or so who have seen them race, they are brand new. New and fascinating—so new, in fact, that not many people even can define a sports car.

Funk and Wagnalls says, among other things, that a sport is "a person of flashy appearance." It also says that sport means "to compete or to display ostentatiously." That might be a good place to start.

General Motors and Chrysler have come out this spring with highly-expensive models of swanky-looking, low-slung open cars, which they refer to as their "sports models." A good many youths around the nation soup up their jalopies and race them in sporting events. In a sense, they certainly are driving sports cars.

But the Sports Car Club of America with 3,500 members and more than 800 licensed racing drivers, and which is recognized as the most important and



outstanding organization of its kind, has a completely different idea of what constitutes a sports car. To them—and it must be admitted that even the SCCA is a bit foggy in its definitions—a sports car is essentially a car built and designed for exceptionally high performance in competitive racing.

The vehicle must, first of all, be neat and clean; it must have exceptional cornering ability, road-holding powers, braking capacity, tight steering and top engine performance. Almost no car of American production can live up to these qualifications.

It would be easy enough to go into technical details concerning torsion bars, horsepower per 1000 rpm, overhead cams and c.c. displacement; but such professional jargon would only bore the *aficionados* and confuse the uninitiated. Let's just say that the average sports car is usually a foreign importation—a low-slung two-seater built along racing lines, and costing somewhere between \$2000 and \$15,000, or even more.

For an activity which was revived only within the last four or five years, sports-car owning and sports-car racing have made amazing progress. This year you may not be one of the more than a quarter-of-a-million persons who will watch the Grand Prix at Watkins Glen, New York—the top event of the season—or even the road races at Bridgehampton, Long Island. But you may very well see one of the numerous races being planned for the nation's airport tracks, or the hill climbs which will be conducted from Maine to California.

Already that Watkins Glen race draws as big a crowd, if not a bigger one, than the Memorial Day classic at Indianapolis; certainly more people drive hundreds and thousands of miles to see the ninety sleek racers compete at the Glen than attend any single baseball game or football match.

The little red MG (Morris Garages), a British import of which relatively few were in this country before World War II, probably is more responsible than anything else for the suddenly-revived interest in sports cars. When the war ended, the United States was far behind in automobile production. A good many potential buyers, unable to purchase their favorite Fords and Buicks, even at stiff black-market prices, turned to the sporty little MG, which the British, with their usual foresight, were turning out for foreign consumption.

The lucky buyers soon discovered they had something which was a little more than a mere means of conveyance. They had, for approximately the same price as a standard low-cost American car, a flashy, high-powered, economical piece of mechanism which at once made them the envy of their

friends and the cynosure of every conventional car driver whom they passed on the road. They had performance and snob appeal at bargain-basement rates. And they started a vogue.

Today the MG Sports Car Club is second only to SCCA in membership and influence.

But, whether your first sports car

is the popular MG, or the almost equally popular but twice as expensive Jaguar, or a special custom-built Ferrari for which you may lay out around ten or fifteen grand, the chances are that shortly after you have driven it home and made your peace with your wife, you will join a sports-car club.

## HERE'S THE WORD ON

### Thinking of buying a road bug? Here's all

**MG (TD):** Price, \$2,115, f.o.b. New York. Two-seater open sports, with all-weather equipment. The engine is four cylinders, 1½ liter (1,250 c.c.) with overhead valves; compression ratio 7.25 to 1. Fifty-four-and-four-tenths brake horsepower at 5,500 rpm. This car will do around 28 miles to a gallon; from 0 to 50 through 4 forward gears in 17 seconds, and has a maximum speed of 82 mph. Ground clearance is 6 inches; weight 2,120 lbs. Blowers and high-speed equipment available.

**PORSCHE:** Price, \$4,517, f.o.b. New York. Two-door, two-seater, with either fixed head or convertible. Good luggage space. Engine, 1 1/10 liter, four-cylinder (1,086 c.c.), inclined overhead valves; two carbs, 40 bhp at 4,000 rpm; 32 miles to the gallon. This car is built with four-speed transmission, a combined overdrive fourth. Has independent suspension, front by torsion leaves; rear torsion bars and trailing arms; double hydraulic shocks. Will do from 0-50 mph in twelve seconds; maximum speed better than 90 mph.

**H.R.G.:** Price, around \$2,500, f.o.b. factory, H.R.G. Engineering Co., Ltd., Tolworth, Surrey, England. This is a 1½ liter modified Singer. It has a four-cylinder (1,496 c.c.) overhead valve and overhead camshaft engine, with a compression ratio of 7-1, and develops 65 bhp at 4,800 rpm. You get 30 to 35 miles to a gallon. It comes in a two-seater, aluminum sport body with detachable fenders, and has a flat-fold windshield. Maximum speed 90 mph with 0-50 mph through gears in 11.2 seconds.

**SIATA "GRAND SPORT":** Price, \$3,975, f.o.b. New York. Body is two-door, two-passenger, conventional design. Engine, four-cylinder (1,395 c.c.), overhead valve, twin carbs, sixty bhp at 5000 rpm; 7.2-1 compression ratio. Four-speed and reverse synchromesh transmission, with 30 mph speed in first, 45 in second, 66 in third, and 90 in fourth at 5,000 rpm. Maximum speed 100 mph. Independent coil-spring action on front suspension; rear suspension, coil and half elliptic springs; telescopic shocks fitted with coil springs.

**FIAT 1100:** Price, \$3,800, f.o.b. Turin, Italy. Engine, 1 1/10 liter (1,089 c.c.) push-rod overhead valve, four cylinders. Compression ratio 6-1. Single carb. Four-door, four-seater sport sedan. Four-speed synchromatic transmission. Good competition chassis, but top speed not over 70 mph.

**CROSLEY SUPER SPORTS:** Price, \$1,050, f.o.b. New York. Four-cylinder overhead-valve engine, with 40-cubic-inch piston displacement, developing 26.5 brake horsepower at 5,400 rpm, with a compression ratio of 10-1. Two-seater body with detachable windshield, folding top. 0-70 mph in 38½ seconds. Top speed 78 mph at 6400 rpm.

**NASH-HEALY:** Price, \$5,000 and up. With an 8-1 compression ratio, the six-cylinder overhead-valve engine has a piston displacement of 234.8 inches and develops 125 brake horsepower at 4,000 rpm. The front suspension is trailing link coil springs; rear coil springs, with track bar rear and sway bar in front. Four-speed synchromesh transmission with axle ratio 4.1-1. Body is two-door, three-passenger. Maximum speed 120 mph.

**JAGUAR XK-120 SUPER SPORT:** Price, \$4,039, f.o.b. New York. A 3½ liter, six-cylinder engine (3,442 c.c.); inclined overhead valves with twin overhead camshafts. Compression ratio 8-1. Twin side-draft SU carbs, coil ignition. Develops 160 bhp at 4500 rpm. Eighteen-and-a-half miles per gallon. Transmission is four-speed synchromesh. Front suspension independent by torsion bars; underslung, semi-elliptic rear springs. Lockheed hydraulic brakes; body,

You will want to do a little more than merely drive the car; you probably will want to race it or, at the least, associate with other people who own sports cars. Certainly you will be following sports-car news. And if you don't race or compete yourself, you will take a lively interest in the men who do and the cars they drive.

A brief rundown on the Watkins Glen race, as an example, will give you a fair idea of what it's all about.

Reminiscent of pre-World War I Vanderbilt Cup races, and such famous European events as the LeMans Grand Prix, the International Grand Prix at Watkins Glen had its inception in 1948. A mere 10,000 specta-

tors were on hand, that first year, to watch one more than two dozen cars cover the 6.6-mile circuit for a total distance of 52.8 miles. The winner was Frank T. Griswold, of Wayne, Pa., who drove an Alfa Romeo at an average speed of 63.7 miles an hour.

But don't let that average speed fool you! To hit it, Griswold had a car which could do 130 miles an hour, and frequently did. For Watkins Glen was then—as it still is—one of the very toughest grinds in the world.

Of the two hundred and fifty-odd thousand people who traveled to Watkins Glen last fall to watch the races, it is very likely that not more than a very small percentage actually knew what they were watching, or what was going on.

Of course, many of them came in the morbid hope of seeing an accident. (They weren't dissatisfied; one spectator was killed.) Another vast group came more to inspect the cars than to see the race itself. To follow the race intelligently and to appreciate what is happening, it is essential to understand the rules, to recognize the cars and to know in which class they are competing.

Road races are, in a sense, strictly handicap affairs, and the cars which compete fall into three basic categories. The first category is termed Sports. These cars must have two usable seats, of certain defined dimensions; one usable door, and fenders. Their engines must use pump fuel—i.e., gas—from a standard gas station.

The second category, Production Sports, must be standard cars produced in quantities of at least 500 per model. Any modifications, such as trimming fenders, souping up the motors, etc., are banned.

The third category is dedicated to the "Unrestricted." This includes any vehicle deemed fit for racing (but which is "neat and clean" according to the SCCA Competition Rule Book) and which does not conform to the other two classes. It is in this class that the Maserati, the Ferrari, the Cunningham, the Mercedes Benz and the really expensive and fastest jobs race.

To understand and follow a road race intelligently, you must know in advance which cars are racing in which class. A scoring sheet, charted off in squares for both laps and car numbers, is almost essential.

Of course, after you have watched several laps, you soon begin to identify the cars in which you may personally be interested. If you're the type who wants thrills, your best bet is to station yourself at a sharp curve—and stand well back from those hay bales. They are put there to protect the driver in case he goes into a skid—not to protect you.

## SPORTS CARS FOR SALE

### the dope on what they cost and what they'll do

open sport, two-door, two-seater, steel, with aluminum doors, hood and luggage-locker lid. All-weather equipment. Can do 0-50 mph through gears in 7.4 seconds. Maximum speed 127 mph with 3.643 axle ratio; 130 mph with 3.2 axle ratio.

**ALLARD J2 COMPETITION:** Price, \$5,285, f.o.b. New York, powered by 5½ liter Cadillac V-8 (5,424 c.c.); compression ratio 7½-1; push-rod overhead valves with hydraulic lifters, dual carbs, coil ignition. Will develop 133 bhp at 3800 rpm. Three-speed synchromesh transmission with Marles steering. Independent suspension by half axles, radius stems and coil springs. Lockheed hydraulic brakes. Competition model comes with aluminum two-seater body, cycle-type fenders. Will do 0-50 mph through gears in 5½ seconds; maximum speed with unmodified stock engine, 130 mph.

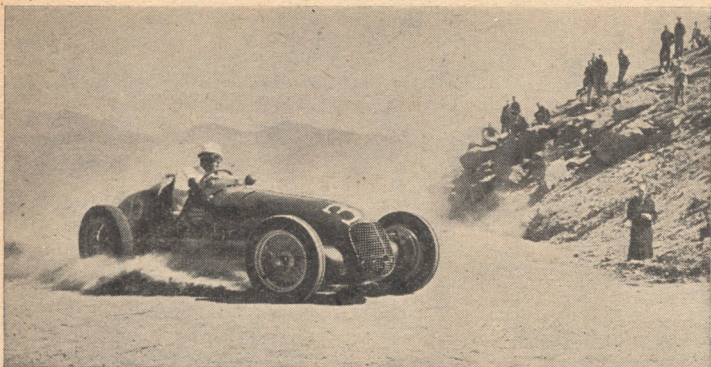
**ASTON MARTIN:** Price, \$8,000, f.o.b. New York. Two-door, three-passenger, permanent-top sports coupe. Engine, six cylinder, 2½ liter (2,580 c.c.) Inclined overhead valves with double overhead camshafts. Dual carburetion with coil ignition. Compression ratio 6.5-1. Develops 105 bhp at 5,000 rpm. This car has four-speed synchromesh transmission, coil-spring suspension all around. Girling hydraulic brakes, center-lock wire wheels, double-acting shocks. Can do 0-50 mph in 8.6 seconds and has a maximum speed of 116.5 mph.

**FERRARI MILLE MIGLIA:** Price, \$10,000 (Mille Miglia two-seater), f.o.b. New York. Body, open sport two-seater, removable windshield and all-weather equipment. Engine, twelve-cylinder, 2 liter, 60 degree V-type (1,995 c.c.). Valves inclined; twin overhead camshaft, three carbs, coil ignition. Compression ratio 10-1. Develops 140 bhp at 6,600 rpm. Five-speed transmission with 3rd, 4th and 5th synchromesh. Rear-axle ratios run 4.4, 4.9 or 5.4. Worm-and-nut steering. Front suspension by transverse spring and wishbones; semi-elliptical rear springs. Hydraulic shocks. Hydraulic brakes. Will do 0-50 in 10 seconds; maximum speed 136 mph. Other models up to 150 mph and over.

**THE CUNNINGHAM:** Price, \$9,000 and up. Bodies by Touring of Milan or on special order. Power, modified Cadillac or Chrysler. Most transmissions come with five forward speeds. Will do 0-60 in 6.5 seconds and has maximum speed of 170 mph. These cars usually ordered custom-built to specifications.

**FRAZER-NASH:** Price, \$7,500 (approximately), f.o.b. Isleworth, Middlesex, England. Two-door, four-passenger, fold-top convertible on tubular frame welded to chassis. Engine, two-liter, six-cylinder (1,971 c.c.) with push-rod overhead valves and 7.5-1 compression. Triple SU downdraft carbs. Coil ignition. Develops 85 bhp at 4,500 rpm. Four-speed synchromesh transmission; rack-and-pinion steering. Independent transverse front suspension; rear suspension torsion bars. Lockheed hydraulic brakes; center-lock hubs, perforated steel-disc wheels. Maximum speed 90 mph.

**BMW VERITAS:** Price, \$6,000 (approximately), f.o.b. Badische, Automobilwerke, Rastatt-Baden, Germany. Two-door, two-seater, all aluminum body, with removable top, windshield and door windows. Engine, two-liter, six-cylinder (1,988 c.c.), with inclined overhead valves and single overhead cam. Compression ratio either 7.7 or 12-1. Three downdraft carbs; coil ignition. Develops 100 bhp at 5,000 or 100 bhp at 6,000. Five-speed forward, synchromesh gear box. Rack-and-pinion steering. Independent torsion-bar suspension all around; double wishbones in front. De Dion rear axle; telescopic dampers. Teves hydraulic brakes with two master cylinders. Perforated alloy disc wheels. This car will do 0-50 in 8 seconds and has a maximum speed of 128 mph.



The climb up Pikes Peak is not strictly for sports cars, but the sports-car boys don't let that deter them from trying—they're always in there fighting, and they make a race of it.



Only four Americans entered the Mexican Pan-American road race last fall, but almost every sports-car fan in the country followed the event, deemed even tougher than LeMans.



Phil Walters, the Manhasset, L.I., gentleman driver, is part of the Briggs Cunningham stable now, and he's always a feared competitor. He should be, having learned his trade in the midgets, where he ate up castor oil fumes some years ago under the name of Ted Tappett.

If you are more interested in straight speed and the passing of one car by another, then get near the center or last quarter of the longest straightaway. There you'll see Ferraris and really hot jobs winding up to a hundred and fifty mph or better.

In spite of the tremendous speeds, and the terrifically dangerous terrain over which the cars race, sports-car competition has had an amazingly good record for safety. In the eight years the sport has been active in this country, only one driver has been killed. And, when you realize that of the men who drive these speed demons all are amateurs, that's a terrific safety record.

Drivers, of course, must pass very strict tests to obtain racing licenses; needless to say, their mounts, too, receive the most careful inspection before being allowed on the track.

Spin-outs and flips naturally are frequent. But excellent driving and rigid supervision so far have kept the record excellent.

A good part of the heavy interest in the sport probably lies in the tremendous curiosity pull of the beautifully low-slung, chromed pieces of precision mechanism which are the cars themselves. Before each meet, these cars are hauled out to the pits, and usually the public is allowed to inspect them.

If it is true that at around the age of six every boy wanted to be a fireman or a cowboy, it is equally true that from the age of sixteen to sixty, every man at sometime or another would like to be the owner of a foreign sports car. He may end up by getting back behind the plastic wheel of his four-year-old Chevy, but for an hour or so, as he looks over those luxurious monsters, he lives in a world of fantasy and dreams.

Even the deep, hollow roar of the exhaust of a little Porsche, cutout open, gives him a thrill. The motor may, in fact, be no more powerful than the one under the hood of his own Buick Dynaflo, but it sure as hell sounds as if it is.

Sooner or later the spectator begins to identify himself with the cars and the sport. He may go to Indianapolis, or perhaps even to a stock-car race at the edge of his home town, but he never would dream of owning and driving one of *those* cars. But when he attends a road race, and he sees dazzling sports cars on the road, also going to the race and driven by men just like himself, he suddenly begins to get ideas.

After all, most of them are not merely racing machines. They are also a means of conveyance. And the drivers aren't professionals; they are men like himself, only they've changed their

hobbies from yachting, or golf, or what have you, to sports cars.

Already, however, in these few short years during which the sport has grown to tremendous popularity, the ugly word "professionalism" is beginning to rear its head. The man with the two-thousand-dollar stock MG, or perhaps the four-thousand-dollar stock Jaguar, has become aware that time after time the races are being won by a select few owners or drivers whose machines represent an investment of tens of thousands of dollars.

As a result, the sport itself faces a peculiar enigma. The MG owner is willing to admit that you can't hold back progress. And he also knows that the fancy and expensive jobs, the specially built Cadillac-Allards and Mercedes Benz and Maseratis, are to a great extent responsible for the drawing appeal of the sport.

Briggs Cunningham, of West Palm Beach, Florida, is probably as typical as any man of this group of semi-professional sportsmen. Cunningham, a millionaire ex-yachtsman from Connecticut, is both a professional and an amateur. As a professional, he is the only builder of a truly American sports car, the Cunningham-Cadillac and the Cunningham-Chrysler.

On the other hand, Cunningham is a first-class, top-flight amateur sportsman. He drives himself and has piloted a car in every Watkins Glen Grand Prix. (He has placed a couple of times, but still has to win.) Cunningham usually enters anywhere from two to three cars in all of the biggest races. These also are driven by amateurs, although his top driver, Phil Walters, third-ranking sports-car pilot for 1952, actually was a professional driver who raced midgets for years under the name of Ted Tappett.

Briggs will show up at an event with three cars, a handful of drivers and a couple of truckloads of parts. The guy who pilots his own three-year-old Jaguar to the event, and stays overnight at a tourist camp with his wife—who doubles as his mechanic—doesn't figure he has much chance against that kind of competition. On the other hand, he is quite willing to admit that it is men like Briggs Cunningham, and the hundreds of thousands of dollars they spend, who have done most to advance the sport.

Many of the SCCA members feel that the competition events should be divided into classes for near professionals and straight amateurs; some are in favor of barring the public from the events and running them more as out-and-out gymkhanas; a few hold-outs would like to see the sport become even more professional.

However, one thing is sure, sports-car clubs and sports-car racing is here to stay.

The biggest national rally this year will be at Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, on September 13th, and will be held in connection with a full road-racing schedule.

The first big event of the year was the Sam Collier Memorial Trophy Handicap, run at McDill Air Force Base, outside of Tampa, Florida, on February 21.

This race, like a number of others, was arranged in co-operation with the Strategic Air Command, for the benefit of the Airmen's Improvement Fund, under the auspices of the SCCA. First place went to Briggs Cunningham, driving a OSCA at an average speed of 77 miles per hour. Second place was taken by Jim Kimberly, driving a Ferrari, and Rees Makin took third behind the wheel of an OSCA.

Six other airforce-base races have been arranged, largely through the co-operation of General Curtis E. LeMay, Commanding General of the SAC, who is a member of the SCCA and who drives a Caddy-Allard competition car himself.

Sports-car racing, which has always been a popular European sport and which was revived in this country soon after the war ended, has already spread south of the border and into South

American countries. The Latins have a fifty-year record for having produced some of the best and finest in automobiles, as well as the fastest and toughest drivers.

Only four Americans entered the Mexican Pan-American road race last fall, but almost every sports-car fan in the country was vitally interested in the grueling contest. This 1,930-mile classic is considered even tougher than the 24-hour endurance test at LeMans, and the equally famous Mille Miglia. Although the race is run in legs over a five-day period, the course itself is partly over mountain roads, at altitudes of 10,500 feet, and has desert straightaways over which the drivers race more than fifty miles in temperatures of 120 degrees.

Such world-renowned pilots as Bonetto, Villoresi, Bracco, Ascari and Behra were among the sixty percent of the drivers who failed to finish. Santos Letona, driving a Jaguar XK-120, lost his life when he spun out as he approached a bridge at extremely high speed. There were also a number of other accidents, but fortunately none of these were fatal.

John Fitch, of Stamford, Conn., who usually drives a Cunningham or a Jaguar XK-120C (C is for a special competition model), came in fourth



Unlike the pits at professional races, the sports-car fans can mill around with the mechanics and drivers at road-race events. They examine the cars, offer advice and sometimes lend a hand on repairs, and the result is that road racing is becoming more popular every day.

in the race in a Mercedes Benz 300 SL, but later was disqualified on a minor technicality.

Whereas the international flavor of sports-car racing is a matter of intense interest to American owners and drivers, the public at large is essentially curious about the purely local aspect of the thing. This summer, for the first time, that public will have plenty of opportunity, in almost all sections of the nation, to see one or more of these events.

As usual, you will find at the tracks members of that rapidly-growing group of antique-car fans, who spend literally thousands of dollars in rehabilitating ancient Duesenbergs, Bugattis, Marmons and Stanley Steamers. These cars, revived to mint condition and gleaming with snot and polish, are brought to the racing events by their duster-and-goggled owners and put on display. They probably attract as much curiosity as the sports cars themselves.

**W**HEREAS Cunningham is the sole American manufacturer of a truly high-performance racing machine, there are several other strictly local products. The Electric Auto-Lite Company, of Toledo, is turning out the Crosley Super Sports, a tiny four-cylinder two-seater with a brake horsepower of 26.5 at 4,000 rpm. It has the amazingly high compression ratio of 10 to 1 and can hit a top maximum speed of 77 mph at 6,400 rpm. This car, at \$1050, delivered in New York, is within the price reach of almost any fan and has done exceptionally well in competition.

Brooks Stevens, from the Middle West, however, has been doing exceedingly well with a sports car of his own design. His machine, the Excalibur, is a handmade job. He uses a Willys six-cylinder engine, thoroughly modified, on a Henry J. chassis. The results he is obtaining have encouraged a number of other sports-car fans with a mechanical bent to begin work on cars of their own design.

These more or less basement-made racing machines must, of course, pass the rigid tests of the SCCA Competition Board in order to keep out of the hot-rod class and become full-fledged sport cars.

The top-rated drivers of 1952, however, stuck mostly to the well-known creations.

Sherwood Johnston, of Boston, was high-point man of the year with his Jaguar XK-120 Special. He was followed by Bill Spear, of Southport, Conn., who doubled between a Ferrari and the sensationally-successful new OSCA. Phil Walters, with his Cunningham, was third; John Gordon Bennett, of New York, drove an MG Special to take fourth place.

John Fitch—Walters' team-mate—who drives both a Cunningham and a Ferrari, came in fifth, followed by George Weaver, of Boston, who chauffeurs a Maserati. Bill Lloyd, of Southport, in his famous Lester MG, a special job with an Offenhauser engine, took seventh.

These boys can be expected to be high up in this year's national standings. But seasoned drivers, such as Cunningham himself, Charles Moran, Phil Hill, Preston Gray, Bob Wilder, Rowland Keith and Al Koster, hardly are to be discounted.

There are, of course, new hot-shot drivers coming up all the time. The SCCA alone is taking in over a hundred neophyte members each month.

Many of the people who recently have become interested in sports cars are having a difficult time distinguishing between the true sports machine and the rather notorious "hot-rods," in which members of our younger generation supposedly are going to hell on wheels.

As far as speed alone is concerned, there are a good many hot-rods around the country which can show dust to some of the fanciest and most expensive sports cars, at least on a straight-away track.

Willy Young, a Denver, Colorado, shipping clerk, last year drove a twin V-8 modified, Ford-engined, slick blue racing job at a speed of 230 mph to take the Bonneville, Utah, Speed Trials Cup. This is a straight-course race over the dried-up salt beds of the lake and is alleged to be the fastest surface on the face of the globe.

Many of the other sixty cars in the trials made speeds up to, and better than, a hundred and fifty miles an hour. And many of these cars, seen on the road, easily could be confused with sports cars. Certainly there are relatively few sports machines in the nation which could have competed with them on a straight speed basis.

On the other hand, few of them would qualify for anything more than the hot-rod classification.

The basic difference is a matter of construction; not in relation to the power plant, but in relation to the chassis. The typical Detroit chassis, on which most hot-rods are built, was never designed for road racing. Only in the true sports car do you find the superb steering, cornering, braking and road-handling that are necessary.

The SCCA refuses to let speed or power alone be the yardstick. They consider that any car which might be a menace to other cars in a competitive event is an outlaw and a hot-rod.

Perhaps the most significant difference between the lightning-fast American hot-rod and the foreign competition sports car lies in the suspension design. Next important feature is the

matter of brakes. Sports cars are built with brake-cooling provisions, and extra attention is given to the brake linings and the drums. It is true that there isn't a standard American car built whose brakes can take the terrific beating of a road race without sooner or later fading.

The easy steering ratio of American cars makes them exceptionally dangerous in tight corners at high speeds.

So far the Germans and Italians are head and shoulders above other nations in the building of sports cars. The English are perhaps the greatest devotees of the sport, and today they have several first-class cars, principally the Jaguar, the Aston-Martin, the MG, the Riley, and a few others. But, up until the last year or so, many of their slickest-looking and most expensive jobs fell far short of being good competition cars.

On the other hand, the English-American cross-breeds have been doing exceptionally well. The American Cadillac and Chrysler engines, on a Healy or Allard chassis, are hard to beat. Italy, of course, excels with its Ferrari, Siata, Alfa Romeo and Maserati.

Germany is rapidly coming back with a new line of Mercedes Benz, BMW's, Porsches, and other makes.

**T**HE Italian genius Ettore Bugatti (*El Patron* to the fanatical members of the Bugatti cult), probably was the greatest builder of race cars in the world, up until World War II began. France adopted him and he built his cars there. With a speed of 155 mph, his 1934 3.3-liter, supercharged Grand Prix Model 59, remains to this day one of the all-time great racing machines. Few modern cars can touch it in performance.

Frazer-Nash has a new car coming up, and there is every chance that several of the Detroit companies will be putting true sports cars into production. They have been quick to see the way the wind is blowing, and they are bound to get on the bandwagon. In any case, until they do, you will see plenty of sports cars on the roads this year.

The Delahaye, HRG, Lea-Francis, Talbot Lago, Riley, Nash-Healy, Jewett Jupiter, Morgan and others, are already available. Today, all you have to do is find the car to fit your pocketbook. But be sure of one thing; if you want to race or compete in SCCA events, make certain your car is a true sports car—not merely a sporty-looking car.

Now, if you're convinced, all you have to do is turn to the price and specifications chart, in another part of this article, and wheel out your checkbook. But be sure your balance is high before you take out your pen! •





Illustrated by STAN DRAKE

# MILK RUN

When the milk he delivered began to smell of death—and something even more evil—Scott knew what he had to do, and the thought sickened him.

HE CAME INTO THE BOTTLE-ROOM with two racks of bottles, an incredibly wide man in his milkman's whites. The smell of stale milk was all about him, and over in one corner Willy Sale breathed cigar smoke into the room, and watched the operation briefly, eyeing him as he racked the bottles and straightened his wide shoulders. He could smell Willy's cigar smoke drifting through the milk-smell, but that was not what made him hurry to get out of the room. What bothered him was the odor

of something wrong, something rotten, that lay behind Willy Sale and his too-expensive suits, something rotten that had sharpened into the smell of death.

Willy Sale took the cigar out of his mouth and said, "You're late this afternoon, Scott. The boss wants to see you."

Scott Mayburn set the last of the bottles down with a careful precision. He turned wheat-colored eyes on Willy and studied him, trying to let the feel-

ing come through to him more strongly, trying to sense the danger here so that he could protect himself. Willy leaned against the damp concrete wall, drawing on his Corona, and his eyes were amused and yet guarded.

Scott arched one bleached eyebrow in thought. "What's it all about, Willy?"

Yet there had been no need to ask. He knew what it was about. The tension that crept into his muscles had told him; the animal flare of his nostrils the instant he had entered had told him; Willy's seeming indolence had told him. Willy didn't bother to take the cigar from his mouth, just mouthed the words out around it.

"Don't know, Scott. The Bull just said he wanted to see you."

**B**UT Willy knew all right, and the knowledge lay in the room along with the smoke and the smell of the milk. This would be something about Verne. This was another part of the smell of death. Scott brought it out into the open.

"How's Verne?"

Willy took the cigar out of his mouth to answer that one, but it wasn't because he wanted to talk more clearly. He passed a hand through the blue smoke. He wanted to see, and Scott felt his sharp little eyes probing in that clever, bitter-sharp way.

"How do you think, Broad Guy? How would you be, with all the blood drained out of you until you were as empty as one of those bottles over there? The doctors don't give him much chance. Two hundred and seventy-three cuts, they say he had."

The pressure that had been in Scott's mind oozed down into his chest, making it swell and hurt as though the pressure inside was ready to burst out through his ribs. He could feel his hands twisting themselves into nervous fists. Willy Sale thrust the cigar back into his mouth and puffed again, obviously enjoying the smoke.

There was nothing left to say. The room was drained of conversation, as empty as the racks of bottles that lined the walls, as empty as the bloodless, almost dead, body of Verne Nix.

Scott turned slowly and went through the door to the hallway. He turned sidewise to go through the doorway, though it was wide and his movement was unnecessary. The action was an old habit that had come out of two wars. He had put those shoulders through some tight places then.

He heard Willy Sale breathe after him, "My God, you're a wide boy!" and he went on up the hall toward the door that lay at the end. He turned the knob and thrust his way through.

He was in the outer office, where the bookkeeping was done. A sallow-faced girl smiled up at him, and he asked, "The boss in?"

"Yeah, Scott. He's been waiting for you."

He thrust his way across the room and rapped sharply. A voice called, "Come in," and he slid through the door in his crablike sidewise motion.

The boss, John Brendon, sat behind an acre of desk. He lifted a shaggy head and gestured toward a chair. "Sit down, Scott. We want to talk to you."

Scott glanced around. There were two other men in the room. One of these he recognized as Roan, the city sheriff; the other, a brown and somber man, was a stranger. Scott let his eyes drift back to Brendon and waited, watching Brendon with seemingly careless intensity. Brendon was a short and shaggy man, with hair that curled roughly, and a habit of lowering his head and shaking it, bull-like, just before he let someone have a chewing-out. It was this that had earned him the nickname of "The Bull," rather than his position in the milk business.

The Bull shook his head slowly, and said, "You know Sheriff Roan, Scott?"

Scott nodded. The pressure was inside his chest again. He looked at his fingers, forcing them to be quiet on his knees.

"And this is Mr. Dodge, a Federal man."

Scott shook hands, studying Dodge. He was a slim, athletic, career-man, who looked more like a diplomat than a law-man. His suit was brown, and his eyes were large and dark and somber, like a spaniel's. He was brown and swift; when he reached for Scott's hand the motion was as greased as a boxer's jab.

Scott thought, "I'll bet this guy would be a regular wizard at judo. Probably knows judo, too, in his business."

Dodge stared back with straight-browed melancholy. He said, "I'm with the Bureau of Narcotics."

**A**ND now the first hint of pattern began to show in what seemed to Scott to have been only a dingy old fabric of death. Now there was a brocade under the evil, a pattern that frightened him. He wanted no part of this. In two wars he had seen enough of ugliness. All he wanted was to carry the milk along the sunny streets, all he wanted was the chance for a cheery, "Good morning, Mrs. Jones," or a chance to throw the ball for the cocker spaniel on Sixteenth Street before he took the empty bottles back to his truck. He didn't know anything; he didn't want to know anything. He didn't want to

wind up like Verne, with all the blood let out of him.

Sheriff Roan said, "We know you gave us a preliminary statement yesterday, but there are some new aspects. We wanted to talk to you about them."

Scott said, "I told you all I know." He looked down at his hands, feeling them bite into his kneecaps.

Roan said, "I know, but there are two new developments. Take a look at this."

He threw a small, wallet-size photograph on the desk so that it slid over toward Scott. Scott picked it up. The picture was of a woman in a bathing suit. The trailing wet disorder of her hair did nothing to lessen her appeal. She had the kind of figure that was made for bathing suits, and she was smiling.

"Well?" Sheriff Roan's voice was sharp. "You know her?"

"No, I don't."

"Never saw her with Verne?"

"No, I didn't." Scott was positive.

"We found this snapshot in his bill-fold. We'll identify her all right." Sheriff Roan put the photograph carefully into an envelope and thrust the envelope inside his coat pocket. "Now suppose we go over your story again. You told us you saw Verne yesterday."

"That's right. I was racking the bottles, just like I did a few minutes ago. Verne came in from his run just as I was finishing up."

"Anyone else in the milk-room?"

"Nobody."

"He seem worried or peculiar?"

The question made Scott frown at the sheriff.

"Now how the devil would I know if he was worried? He didn't say anything, if that's what you mean."

**W**HAT Scott said was true enough. Verne hadn't said anything. But he had wanted to. There had been something on his mind all right, and he had been trying to work up a way to say it, when Scott walked out on him. Scott was glad he hadn't heard whatever it was, for he might have got mixed up in this, and he didn't want any part of it.

For the first time in the conversation the brown man leaned forward and spoke. He asked:

"You know how much money Verne was making?"

Scott frowned over that one, too. "Something like I am, I guess. Ninety—a hundred a week. Maybe a little more or a little less."

"Then can you explain how he managed to bank something over a thousand a month? Would you have any ideas on that?"

"I haven't the faintest idea."

Dodge leaned forward. He said sharply, "Let's stop this kidding

around. You know I'm here from the Bureau of Narcotics, and you learn that Verne was banking quantities of dough. And you want me to think you can't add two and two and guess where he got the money?"

Scott felt the nervousness again, the gravel in his stomach. He looked at the narcotics agent.

"Of course dope ties into it some way, or you wouldn't be here. But I don't know a thing about it. I haven't any part of it, I'm not interested in any part of it. All I want to do is handle my milk and my customers."

DODGE's eyes were brown and sad. "An evil thing, the dope traffic. But you're not interested in fighting it. Is that it?"

Scott said shortly, "Not exactly that. I just don't know anything."

"You know anyone else who is making too much money around here?"

Scott's mind whirled back to the haze of expensive cigar smoke and Willy Sale. Yet a few good suits and good cigars didn't mean much. A single man could buy four-bit cigars on a hundred a week. He shrugged and said, "I told you, I don't know any more."

The narcotics agent stared at him for an instant. "All right; but do this: If you run into anything that ties into the drug traffic will you report it?"

"If I find anything," Scott agreed.

Dodge leaned back thoughtfully. "I know what you're thinking," he said. "You're thinking about Verne, about the hundreds of cuts on his body, and the way the blood was let out of him. You're thinking that that's a pretty terrible thing to do to a man, and you don't want it done to you. But the thing they do to a thousand other men is worse. What they did to Verne is nothing to what drug addiction does to a man. That torture isn't a matter of hours, or days. It lasts a whole lifetime. Remember that, if you run into something." He leaned back, watching Scott, the intensity fading slowly from his face.

Sheriff Roan took over the questioning.

"You didn't see Verne after you left the bottle-room?"

"That's right."

"Do you know where his body was found?"

"I heard," Scott said slowly, "that they found him in the bottle-room this morning when they opened up."

"That's right. But he wasn't killed there, for there wasn't any blood. Now would you have any idea at all where he might have been killed, or who did it, or why it was done?"

Scott's hands were torturing his kneecaps again. "I don't know a thing."

"Okay, then." Roan and Dodge rose. "I guess that will be all. Thanks for your help."

The Bull said, "If you'll stay a minute, Scott, there's a bit of business I want to talk over with you."

The two visitors went out. Brendon gestured with one hand as though he was trying to clear away a fog that lay about him.

"I could put on another man in Verne's place. Or I could divide the territory between you and Willy Sale. I think you two could handle it, and it would probably run an extra fifty a week. Think you can handle it?"

Scott nodded, his memory recalling much longer working days in Korea. "Sure, I can handle it. And I can use the money too."

Then he happened to remember something else, and he shook his head, as though he could shake the possibility away. *Forget it*, he told himself. There were a lot of houses in the swank district that Verne had serviced, and there were a lot of milk companies in town—there wasn't much chance of seeing Laura there. He didn't think he could stand that.

He closed his eyes, remembering the two of them as they had been when he left for Korea—remembering the slim fire of her, the warm promise of womanhood; and remembering the letter a year later, the letter that wasn't quite like her, but was like a lot of letters a lot of other bitter guys received.

HE shook his head again. *Two bottles today, Mrs. Huntington? Or you're low on butter today; shall I leave a pound, Mrs. Huntington?* He didn't think he could stand that.

He was aware that the Bull had stopped talking and was staring at him, as though something were wrong.

"What's the matter, Scott?"

"Nothing, sir. Just a thought. What's the new route breakdown?"

Brendon eyed him keenly. "I figure the dividing line will be Fleet Street. You take all of Knob Hill west, and Willy will take the eastern half. That okay?"

Scott dug at his knees again. That was where Laura Huntington lived all right, west of Fleet Street. But surely Fate wouldn't play that trick on him. After all, there were a lot of dairies.

"Okay by me. Is that all?"

"That's all, Scott."

He slid out the door, his bleached eyebrows drawn together in thought, his shoulders slanted sidewise in the old habit as he passed through the door. Willy Sale was just getting into his Cadillac as Scott came out, and he turned his head and called, "Have

you heard? Verne died this morning. See you tomorrow, Wide Boy."

Scott stared, and the Cadillac whooshed away from the curb. Then he began to walk slowly toward his apartment. His feet took the path through habit, for his mind was not on walking.

He was thinking of that Cadillac, and Willy Sale, and the hundreds of cuts on Verne's dead body. He was thinking of Korea and Laura, and milk for Mrs. Huntington, and these things raced through his mind in an uneasy montage that had almost been quiet, until Willy Sale stirred them up and brought them to focus.

"Tomorrow?" he repeated silently.

## Chapter Two

GOING UP THE CONCRETE WALK toward the Colonial mansion where Laura Huntington lived, Scott began to hurry, swinging his left arm violently to balance the load on his left. Puppelike, childlike, he was a man going in to take a beating, and hurrying to get it over with. He had four bottles of milk and four bottles of cream in his carrying-rack. Milk for a customer he had never wanted—milk for Laura Huntington. He hoped the back door was open and that there would be no one there.

He checked his route book at the back door. That was right, four bottles of each. The name was right too: Mr. and Mrs. Donald Huntington, 47 Knob Hill Manor. The book swam before his eyes for a moment, mingling with the ghosts of the past. *What was done was done.* He rapped smartly on the back door, and receiving no answer, pushed inside.

There was no one stirring in the house, though it was already ten o'clock. Apparently the servants were out and the family was sleeping.

His hands were steady as he opened the door to the refrigerator and put the milk inside, but not because he was easy in his mind. It was because he wanted to get out of here, to get out into the morning sun again, and he must make no noise that might disturb someone and thus delay him.

He put the last bottle gently inside the refrigerator with a surge of relief, and closed the door gently. Tomorrow would be easier. He would be okay now—a man had to face facts sometime, to win the battles of the mind instead of running away from them. . . . He stepped back and into the carrying-rack. The rack rattled and skittered, and turned under his feet. He fell against the breakfast table, and watched a glass bud vase slowly teeter, then overturn. It began to roll toward the edge of the table, slowly, its path as inevitable as

the sun's motion, while Scott fought to push himself erect with his hands on the table. The vase went over the edge.

*Crash!* The sound of shattering glass went through the house with a tremendous clarity. A voice drifted out of the hallway, and the tapestry he feared began to unroll around him. The voice was a woman's.

"Is that you, Verne?"

He clung to the edge of the table. "Just the milkman, ma'am. I'm afraid I've broken something."

He heard her footsteps coming down the hall, the soft young shuffle of her feet, the rustle of a silk dressing-gown. And then she was framed in the doorway, looking at him out of liquid green eyes.

"Scott!"

Her voice was a knife from the past. She was running to him then; she threw her arms wide to hold him around the shoulders and press against him.

"Scott, darling! It's been so long!"

He was fighting the battle of the mind again, fighting the feel of her.

His hands were at his sides, caught there by her grip on his shoulders, and he fought the feel of her pushing against him, the hot warmth of her body against his milkman's whites. His fists clenched and unclenched, as though they were not a part of him, hardening at last into spaced steel rods that slid up along the smooth curve of her hips and fastened like a vise on her waist. The feel of her body against the rigid fingers was of silk and fire; she didn't have a damned thing on under that dressing-robe.

**S**HE kissed him, her lips parted under his, so that for an instant the clock of fate turned back for Scott, and the things that were had never been. He drew back just far enough to murmur the old words into her ear:

"You're a lot of woman, Green Eyes."

She drew back from him, laughing, "Wasn't I always, Scotty?" and something in him sickened and died.

But still the feel of her was more than a man could stand, and he tugged at her, bringing her closer.

She fought far enough away from him to speak softly. "Not now, Scotty. Not just yet."

The sickness twisted inside him, but he was too deep in this pattern now. The wild male part of him would never let him out. He stared into the green agate eyes. "Your husband?"

"Out of town, and the servants are gone too. But the milk, lover—let's have a glass of milk first."

He stared at her, surprise dulling his passion.

"The milk, Scotty—set it out!"

Then, as he turned to the refrigerator door without understanding at all, she breathed, "What a set of shoulders you have, Scotty, what a beautiful set of shoulders!"

He brought the four bottles of milk out of the refrigerator and stared at her, anger deepening the color of his eyes. He thought, *Yes, if you'd had to shovel in the steel mill since you were 10 years old you might have a set of shoulders too. And you might have become a real woman instead of a tramp.*



She poured the last of the fourth bottle down the sink—then she whirled and shrieked at him, her eyes bitter and flashing, their green color now as turbulent as the sea. He stared, and the sickness settled in his stomach and stayed there. "I guess I went crazy," she said.

The word was bitter on his tongue as he stared at her, but he swallowed it as she bent over the milk bottles and threw a green-eyed glance at him.

"Which one, Scotty, which one?"

He looked his bewilderment.

She was trembling with eagerness. She uncapped the nearest bottle, and poured the milk down the sink, looking for something inside. She thrust the bottle aside and started with the next one. He came close beside her now, to watch, and not understanding she said, "In a moment, Scotty; now don't be greedy."

She poured the last of the fourth bottle down the sink—then she whirled and shrieked at him, her eyes bitter and flashing, their green color now as turbulent as the sea.

He stared, and the sickness settled in his stomach and stayed there.

He saw reason filter back slowly into her. She passed a hand dully over her head and shook herself, like a person rousing from a dream. She turned from the sink and faced him, her hands clutching the edge of porcelain and metal behind her.

"I've been sick, Scotty. I get excited sometimes. I keep telling the milkman not to bring that homogenized milk, to bring some with real cream in it. I guess I just went crazy."

Her eyes were clear again, and he stared back at her, holding his face wooden.

"I'm sorry; I'll make a note of it for next time," he said. "And I can't tell you how sorry I am that you've been sick."

She had control of herself now, and came across to him, clutching him again. She said in a low voice, "I wasn't just being crazy when I kissed you, though."

He laughed and pushed her away. "Better take it easy with the milkman, honey. With all those jokes, people might not understand." He picked up the rack and held it in front of him, between them.

She stared at him. Her face went faintly white.

"Damn you, Scotty; damn you and those funny eyes! I can't read a thing in them. You're just the same as always."

He put his hand on the door. "People don't change much." He went out and closed the door firmly, thinking that she hadn't changed much either, but he'd never known before just what she was really like. The queasiness was in his stomach, and he moved out into the sun.

He thought, *I suppose I ought to feel sorry for her now. Maybe I will, after a while.*

Yet even the spaniel on Sixteenth Street couldn't take this sickness out of him, and the sun that had baked down so pleasantly now seemed to make no difference. He was still twisted inside, his stomach recoiling as his mind had recoiled earlier.

**H**E finished his run and racked the bottles. It was late afternoon, much later when he finished, and Willy Sale came in just behind him from the other run. The guys with the short routes had long since gone home, and he could see a weariness in Willy's shoulders that matched his own.

Willy said, "You were in there with the Bull quite a while yesterday. Sheriff was there, and that narcotics agent?"

"Yeah." Scott didn't feel like talking.

"Suppose they gave you a lot of baloney like they handed me. Stuff about dope traffic and the like."

So they had talked to Willy too. Of course they would. Scott let his gaze settle on Willy, probing him.

"Yeah. But what the hell has that got to do with me? All I want to do is deliver the milk."

Willy Sale stared back while he cut the tip from a cigar with a silver cut-

ter. He lit the cigar with a silver lighter, and breathed blue smoke at Scott.

"I like you, Wide Guy. You got the right philosophy. See you tomorrow." He turned and went out.

The Bull's head appeared at the side door and he called, "Scott, come in a moment when you're through." The door closed.

Scott nodded, too late to be seen, and slid through the door after his boss. When he came into the office Brendon wasn't sitting behind the big desk, but was pacing up and down, smoking a cigar like Willy Sale's, and pushing out the smoke in nervous blue puffs.

"How'd it go?" Brendon asked.

"Fine!"

**B**RENDON turned toward him.

"Scott, I built this business from one cow and a two-acre pasture, and I'd hate to see a scandal ruin me. Dodge thinks we are mixed into the narcotics racket—not me personally, but somehow the business ties in. If you find anything like that I wish you'd let me know before you do anything else."

Scott held his face wooden. He couldn't blame Brendon for being concerned. But he didn't want to wind up like Verne did, with the life cut out of him, and that meant he couldn't open his mouth to a single person. He lifted his head to stare at Brendon, holding his eyes as meaningless as wheat straw.

"Sure, I'll talk to you first."

"You haven't seen anything?" Brendon asked eagerly.

"Not a clue, not a thing. I'm just a big mug in white pants and coat, not a shamus. If I run into anything you'll know about it. But I don't want to run into anything. I'm hired to deliver milk."

Brendon shook his head wearily, indicating the end of their conversation, "Okay, boy. See you tomorrow."

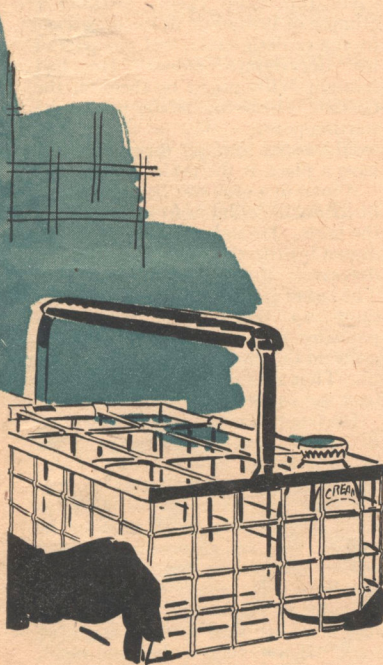
Scott went out of the office and walked up the concrete walk toward his apartment. He walked slowly, his face as hard as his muscles. When he got into his room he halted by the telephone. He stretched out his hands and flexed them, looking at them for an instant. He said to himself, "You damned fool." He picked up the telephone and dialed.

After a time an answer came. He put his mouth close to the mouthpiece.

"Let me talk to Mr. Dodge, please," he said. . . .

A half hour later Dodge entered his room.

He came in quietly, still wearing a brown suit, though this one was of tweed. He accepted a cigarette and a chair; sank slowly into the chair and



lighted the cigarette, his brown eyes on Scott. Scott studied him.

"You've boxed a bit, haven't you?" Scott asked. "It shows in the way you move. You're so damned swift and don't seem to have any joints. I figure that means boxing."

Dodge said, "Not boxing. I've fenced a lot. I keep in shape."

"A little jiu-jitsu too, perhaps?" Scott suggested.

"Perhaps." The brown eyes studied Scott, understanding that all this was just conversation, just a way of trying to lead up to something. His voice was level, cutting through these preliminaries:

"You didn't call me to discuss athletics."

Scott looked down at his big hands. He twisted them, and his shoulders moved uneasily.

"No. I called you to tell you that you were right about this milk business. There's some dope traffic, and it reaches some of the town's richest people."

"Who is it and how is it done?" Dodge asked.

"I don't know who it is, but the dope is delivered in bottles of milk. I didn't see any, but I saw a woman search through the bottles. I'd guess it's hung in the middle, inside some sort of waterproof container."

Dodge let out a slow breath. "His body was like a bent spring. 'Who puts the dope in the milk?'"

"I don't know." Scott shook his head slowly.

"How is it paid for?"

"I don't know that either," Scott said.

"Do you know who's mixed in it down at the company? The boss? Willy Sale? The other boys?" The narcotics man looked keenly at him, waiting for the reply.

"I don't know," Scott said, "except that Verne was in it somehow. The woman called his name when I went in, thinking I was him. Then she thought I knew about the dope. She tried to cover up then, but too late."

DODGE asked softly, "What's her name? Where does she live?"

"Mrs. Laura Huntington, 47 Knob Hill Manor. I'd guess she's been on the stuff for some time. She needs it pretty bad." With the words Scott began to feel the first trace of a slow-coming pity.

Dodge's eyes weren't soft any more. He said, "It's not nice to see, is it? Are you going to find out the rest of the things I want to know?"

Scott shook his head slowly. "No. But take it easy, will you, when it comes to Mrs. Huntington? And don't tell her who gave you the information." He looked at Dodge for confirmation, but the narcotics agent's

face was like carved stone. There was no compromise in his answer.

"There are laws against addiction, laws against possession. If you won't help me, I'll have to work through this woman—catch her with narcotics, pull her in. You'll have to testify."

Scott clenched his fists, turned his wide shoulders in a boxer's crouch. "Damn you!" he cried. "Get up out of that chair!"

The agent slid to his feet, a swift brown shadow. Scott had the thought that it would be like trying to hit a ghost. He stared into the agent's eyes, and found a hardness there that was as old as the rocks of the earth. The anger began to run out of him. He said again, "Damn you!" And then, "What do you want me to do?"

There was no triumph in the brown man's face. Scott sensed that he would do anything, *be* anything, to stop this traffic, but that he had no liking to have to pressure a man like this.

"I'll try to find out and report to you," Scott suggested.

"That won't be enough," the agent said harshly.

Scott stared at the taut lips of the other man.

Dodge continued, "I want it all: The gang; the list of customers; the mechanics; how they put it in the milk. I want to pick up one of them in an actual delivery, and I want to have the goods on him till we can sweat the whole thing out of him. There's no help for it, Scott. You'll have to join the gang."

Scott sat down suddenly. "And turn them in?" he asked. "Wasn't that what Verne tried?"

"Yes, that's what he tried. But he started with them—on *their* side, not ours. He was just a kid; he hadn't seen what the stuff does to people, and he made good dough handling it. Then one day he saw something, somebody, that sickened him with the whole beastly game, and he came to us. The trouble is, he came too late, and he came without evidence. He went back to get the evidence, and that was the last of him." Dodge's face was hard.

"You hate the drug traffic, don't you?" Scott said. "You hate it like poison."

Dodge's brown eyes were bits of agate. "You saw something today. Don't you hate it now?"

Scott nodded.

The narcotics agent put on his hat. He said, "I come from one of the finest families in Boston—*Mayflower* stock, and all that. Expected to take over the family business, the family honor, and all that. But all that was B.C."

"B.C.?" Scott stared at him.

"Before Cocaine. Be careful, Scott, and remember we'll be watching over you." He shook Scott's hand firmly

and went out, a swift brown shadow in the door, and then only the memory of his fluid motion remained. The door closed, and Scott turned back to the center of the room. He stood there in the center and fumbled a cigarette out of his pack and lit it, thinking quietly. He put the cigarette in his mouth, and said to himself, *So Europe and Korea weren't enough. You damned fool, you poor damned fool!*

He crushed the half-smoked cigarette into an ashtray, and began to thumb through the telephone directory. After a while he found the address he wanted—that of Jake Cairn's Golden Wheel, the fanciest gambling joint in town.

### Chapter Three

THE LITTLE SLIDING WHISPER of the dice as they rolled over the green felt came to Scott's ears. The sound was a whisper out of the past, a reminder of other dice slithering along the olive roughness of an Army blanket; a reminder of other dangers, and another jungle—not so neon, not so chrome and clean. But the feeling—that lay between the wide blades of his shoulders was the same as then: the taut, tense warning of danger, the little voice inside that whispers to get out now, while there is yet time.

He thrust up closer, catching a glimpse of Willy Sale in the far corner by the roulette table, and one part of his uncertainty faded. He had thought Willy might be there, at the Golden Wheel—and Willy *was* at the starting-point. After a time Willy would notice him; by then he should have a place at the table.

A man in a gray suit held the cubes, his paunch resting against the edge of the table. He sighed and with the in-drawn breath, the dent in his paunch deepened; then he threw the dice. The cubes galloped and bounced, and came up big, double big. The paunchy man stared at the twelve spots on the dice and said, "That does it! That cleans me out. I'll get it back next time."

He laughed in a nervous skittering of sound, and turned away. He brushed against Scott on the way out, and there was no laughter in his eyes. After he left the table his walk became less brisk. Scott thought he looked like an automaton, a man whose muscles are moved by habit, not hope. *He might be back*, Scott thought; *he might not*. If the money had been his own, then he might be back. If not, then a shot one night, perhaps tonight, and after that the man wouldn't be back, ever. Scott moved to the table. "I'll take the dice," he said.

The dice were cold in his hand and he warmed them as he threw a twenty-dollar bill.

"I'll start little and grow big as a house." At each side the puppets beside him moved for the swing of his big shoulders, and he threw the dice swiftly against the far corner. They came up big again, but not quite so big, a five and a six, and forty dollars lay in front of him.

"Let it ride. I'm building a fence with the stuff." He threw a seven.

"Easy money," he called, "and let the bet ride again." He rolled an eight and made it, and a hundred and sixty dollars lay on the table.

He shot it, and lost, and the dice and the money vanished off the table for an instant. Then new money fluttered, and the dice rolled, and the man beside him was shooting and talking to the dice.

But Scott had what he wanted. Out of the corner of his eyes he saw Willy Sale drifting toward him, elegant in a tailor-made tuxedo. Scott plunged, betting heavily against the shooter, and lost. Willy Sale moved up and put a hand on his shoulder.

"Didn't know you were a sport."

Scott stared at him. "Sport, hell! I need about five thousand dollars, and I need it bad. I figure I'll get it here."

Willy's eyes held the special amusement reserved for fools. "Sure, friend. I don't know a better way. I'll watch you for luck."

Scott would have liked to observe the little man, to study his eyes as Scott's need for money filtered through his mind. With Verne gone, the narcotics ring would need to act in some way to service its customers. Some-time tonight Willy was going to think of that. But Scott had to watch the game.

He had the dice in his hand again, and anticipation tightened his fingers. This was where he would end up in trouble; this was where he'd be so desperate that Willy would figure he really needed money to get out of trouble, desperate trouble of some kind.

Scott rattled the cubes. "Starting high and going up. I'll shoot a hundred."

The dice curled out of his hand and came up four and three. He said, "I'll let her ride. You folks grab the elevator while she's going up; I'm hot."

He rolled another natural, and he let that ride. He rolled three naturals before he made a point, and he could see Willy Sale getting interested.

Willy crowded in, his voice sharpening with awe. "You're hot, kid." He threw five hundred on the table and said, "I'm riding with the red-hot."

## WORDLY WISE



## MAGAZINE

English has borrowed only a few words from Arabic, and most of them were absorbed during the Crusades. Among the terms brought home from the Holy Land by soldiers was that for a military warehouse. Specially designed by the Arabs so that it could be defended by a few men on the inside, such a storage place was called a *makhazin*.

An idea like that was too good to pass up; returning home, Crusaders began to build *magazines*. At first they were used exclusively for military gear, later for any miscellaneous collection of goods.

Then, in 1731, a publisher decided to capitalize upon the word by launching the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In the introduction to the first issue it was described as "a Monthly Collection to treasure up, as in a Magazine, the most remarkable Pieces on the Subjects above-mentioned."

Highly successful, this first magazine was quickly imitated and its name came to be a standard term.

—By Webb B. Garrison

Scott threw, and won. He threw, and he had made five passes in a row. Thirty-two hundred dollars lay on the table.

"I'll shoot it!" he said excitedly.

He was warming the dice in his hands when a scent reached him from somewhere behind him, over his left shoulder. It was a scent out of place in this green-felt jungle—a breath of apple blossoms, and pine, and something fainter yet that might have been Mother Eve herself. He glanced back once, and a woman's eyes stared into his own, so close that her perfume almost wrapped them together. The scent was coming from her earlobes, and he stared for the thousandth part of a second, holding the dice, while everything stopped.

She had blue eyes, and above them the brows were straight and blonde and fine. She had honey-colored hair, pulled back from good cheekbones into a knot like twisted taffy at the back of her neck. Her face was oval, around those fine cheekbones. He had the thought that she was really beautiful, but not the kind of girl to be dangerous.

Then she smiled and spoke to him. When she smiled he realized that her mouth was too large, her lips too warm, too human, too generous for that cameo face. Her voice was not the clear soprano he had expected,

but contralto, rich and deep, and husky.

"Keep your luck, stranger man." Her eyes were bright blue and excited.

He thought, *Well, now! Well!* and breathed on the dice as he stared at her. He whirled and threw; the dice went out as if they were on invisible rails, and he had sixty-four hundred dollars on the table.

Willy Sale whistled once, his eyes hard and bright. He said abruptly, "Well, Wide Guy, there's your five thousand bucks," and turned to move away from the table.

SCOTT thought angrily, "*This isn't what I wanted.*" He said, "I'll shoot it all," and the crowd pressed forward and threw Willy Sale back against the table.

Scott didn't hear the crowd; he heard only the faint indrawn gasp of the honey-haired blonde at his shoulder, and he turned again and looked into her eyes. He was startled by what he saw there, and his expression framed a question.

She shook her head slowly from side to side, saying "no" to him. She picked up the name that Willy had used, but on her lips it didn't sound cold or bitter.

"I think your luck's run out, Wide Guy."

He turned from her again and threw. He hit a six, and the crowd murmured, then hushed. He stared at the money on the table, and remembered how many months he would have to carry milk for that many dollars.

He threw the dice and sevens out. There was an audible sigh from the crowd as the money vanished off the table like leaves blown clear by the wind. He didn't have to act to let his shoulders sag; he didn't have to force the lines that lay across his face as he thrust out of the ring around the dice tables. That money would have bought a farm, or a nice business here in town.

He saw Willy Sale's eyes, sharp and thoughtful, as he shoved past the little man; then he got that whiff of perfume again, and felt the moth-light touch of a hand on his arm. He turned.

"I'm sorry." She smiled at him.

Now that his mind was off the dice, she seemed familiar somehow. He tried to remember as he spoke.

"It's all right. I should have listened to you."

Her eyes were sympathetic.

"Stony-broke, now?"

"Stonier than stony. I could have used that dough."

She fumbled in a blue leather handbag, thrust a folded bill at him. "It's not much, just carfare and a drink for the road. When you come back you can break the bank."

His big hand closed on hers, forcing her fingers back over the bill, forcing it back into the blue purse.

"I'm not that stony. I can buy carfare and a drink. Or two drinks, if you'll have one with me."

"I'll have just time before my number. I'm Janis Lane." She laid her hand on his arm, in that feather-soft touch.

That almost stopped him. He stared at her as they slid into seats. He saw her nod, and a white-coated bartender came over to take their order.

He gave the order, then turned back to her, amazed. "You work here? For Jake Cairn?"

She said, carefully, "I sing three times a night. In that way I work for Jake."

Scott thought it was clever the way she'd said that—the way she'd implied, *No, I'm not a strip-tease, and I'm not a "B" girl. But I do work for Jake Cairn.*

Scott should have known that; she was not the type to be doing the cheaper work, and too fine a girl to be Jake's mistress.

She smiled at him and got up to sing her song.

There was a postage-stamp-size platform in the corner, and a few mu-



"Mr. Alex Leslie of White Plains, N. Y., I presume?"



sicians in tuxedos began to coax music into the room. She began to sing, making something warm and exciting and faintly naughty out of a tune that was meant to be pure young love. Here and there a man turned to look at her, and murmured, "Wow!" under his breath. Then someone hit big at the roulette wheel, and the faces turned away. Scott felt almost as if he were alone with her, listening to the end of the song.

She came back to the table. "Let's get out of here."

He said, "Yes, let's," and came to his feet beside her. A thought came and he asked, "No competition tonight? I mean, no boy friend?"

She said shortly, "Several boy friends, but none tonight."

"And no special one?"

"No very special one. Perhaps a favorite one, but he's out of town." She took his arm and they went out. He followed through the opening with his shoulders slanted; out of the corner of his eyes he could see Willy Sale smiling after him. His smile was sharp, the knowing smile he had shown earlier, the one that revealed the peculiar amusement occasioned by fools. Scott saw the smile, and coldness came into his back, and bitterness came into his throat, and he smiled at the smooth ivory shoulders going out ahead of him. He said to himself, so low that she could not hear him, *So it's like that, is it?* He wondered again why her face seemed familiar.

WHEN he reached the street, he pulled her into the shadow of the willow tree that stood by the door and kissed her, crushing his lips against hers with sudden violence. She did not struggle; for an instant she responded, infiltrating his bitterness with something strangely sweet. Then she pushed him away.

"Losing twelve grand on a roll of the dice does funny things, Wide Boy—or maybe you just wanted to see how that would be. But that's it for tonight—and if that doesn't please you, you'd better say good night right now."

"If that's the way you want it. I promise to behave. But please call me Scott."

He didn't believe that was what she wanted at all, though, for he remembered her now.

This was the woman whose photograph had been in Verne Nix's wallet.

They made the town and he dropped her at her door. There had been fun but no foolishness. He got back just in time to pick up his truck with the milk, and start his day's work. She smiled at him with a shine in her eyes, and he smiled back and moved in on her.

But she slid away from him, as

smooth as moonlight. She wouldn't even kiss him good night. . . .

Ten days went by. Ten days of Janis Lane, and a single rationed kiss each time as they said good night. Ten days, while the fine leather tan on Scott's face changed to a night-club pallor that stared back at him when he shaved. Ten days of wondering about Janis, ten days of complaining about dough to Willy Sale.

He had even gone in to Brendon and demanded a raise, and gone out complaining bitterly when he had failed to get it. He had thought he went too far with that one, for Brendon was within a hair of firing him.

Just when he had given up hope, it began to pay off. It paid off the way he had figured, and just the way he had feared.

It was evening; he had picked up Janis and was driving her car into the country, for a few miles of fresh air before she had to get back to sing at the Golden Wheel. He turned the car off the road, and up under an oak that spread a great green umbrella over them. He cut the motor, and without words they sat and watched the gray twilight come. The wind picked up a cool note from somewhere ahead of them, and Janis tilted her head back and said without warning, "Kiss me, Scott."

He kissed her, and now the holding-back was over. She was warm and pliant in his arms. He kissed her again, and it was everything it was supposed to be.

She said, "I have a message for you, Scott. Jake Cairn would like to see you tonight."

Very gently he let her go, easing her back against the seat. He fumbled cigarettes out of his pocket, and turned to push the lighter in so that she could not see his face.

That moment was enough. His hands were steady as he lit cigarettes for them, and handed hers across to her. She drew on the cigarette, and behind the red glow her eyes were murky in the twilight.

"You'll be late." He kicked the motor into purring awareness.

"Does it matter? Sometimes I'd like never to go back. I'd like to head out somewhere and never see the Golden Wheel again. I wonder what would happen if we did just that?"

But Scott wasn't having any. It might be an act, it might not. If it was an act, he didn't want to know. If it was the truth—well, he had an idea that he knew what Jake would do to a girl who crossed him. Something like what had happened to Verne, or worse.

He started her car, headed it back onto the ribbon of concrete and turned on the lights. The road stretched away in front of them,

straight as an arrow, and they were alone in the world, just two people behind the bloom of the headlights.

He pushed the accelerator down, faster, faster, *faster!* The needle on the car banged the stop and the tires whined like a dog in pain.

Janis cried, "Scott!" And he eased off the pressure on the gas feed, feeling the metal monster he rode slowing, coming back to more normal speed. He turned toward Janis, seeing her shape dimly in the lights of the instrument board.

"Sorry. I just wanted to let her run for an instant." The action had let the tension out of him; he was hard now, hard and cold enough to ignore the warning that came through his shoulderblades. . . .

He dropped Janis in the gambling-room at the Golden Wheel. She whispered, "Jake's office is through there. Up one flight of stairs, and straight in front of you." Then she was gone.

He slanted his shoulders through the curtained opening and went up, his feet soft on the thick carpet. He rapped gently on the door, and Jake Cairn's voice came heartily through the door: "Come in."

Scott Mayburn pushed the door open and slid inside.

## Chapter Four

JAKE CAIRN CAME FORWARD and shook Scott's hand. Scott had seen the gambling tycoon before, but only at a distance.

Cairn said, "You'll find that chair the most comfortable. Scotch?"

Scott said, "With a spot of soda, please," and dropped into the chair. Cairn turned to the bar that occupied one wall of the room, a huge complexity in carved teakwood. He opened it until its doors stood out like a many-bladed knife, and he did things deftly with Scotch and ice and seltzer.

Scott studied the man as he performed this act. Cairn was a big man, almost as broad as Scott himself, but instead of tapering down at the waist, Jake Cairn went straight down. He was thick-waisted and thick-legged, a big keglike man built for power and stamina, not speed. His bulk was concealed by the ultimate in hand tailoring, a soft flannel three-button suit in dark blue. He handed Scott the drink and said, "Luck!"

Scott said, "Luck," and took a pull at the drink. He didn't sip it, just poured a healthy slug down his throat and grinned at Jake.

Jake said, "I like that, Scott. I like a man who trusts himself and my liquor and drinks like he means it."

"I like you, too, Jake. Now let's get down to business."

Jake's eyes glittered faintly with surprise. He said, "Quick on the trigger, too! Maybe you know why I asked you to come."

Scott took another drink, rolling the Scotch around on his tongue. It was the best, the very best. He looked at Jake. "I figure that since Brendon already gave me half of Verne's milk route, maybe you were going to give me some more of it."

Jake Cairn's voice dropped. Scott could sense the danger in it.

"You've got a lot of information, Scott. It seems to me you know a surprising amount."

Scott stretched lazily, and grinned. "I'd like another drink. And I'd like to know if you'd really prefer to employ a fool or a blind man instead of me."

Jake studied him for a moment, then turned to mix the additional drink. He said, "I guess you're right. You'd be a fool not to have figured it out. You know what the business is?"

"Dirty business. Dope business."

**J**AKE pushed the drink to Scott. "You got no reason to let your conscience worry you. Suppose a guy is in pain. He sends for a doctor, and the doctor gives him a shot to ease the pain. He gets his narcotic, and the doctor is a blessing to mankind. Suppose he can't get to a doctor. Or suppose the pain isn't one that the doc can poke his forceps into. *We* ease the pain of a guy like that—and we're the scum of the earth."

Scott felt anger coming up in him at this reasoning. He said boldly, "It's the nastiest business in the world, and I know that. It's the kind of business no one but a devil would stoop to. It ruins people and ruins lives. It makes murderers and thieves and prostitutes. It's an ugly business, Jake. Why kill ourselves?"

Anger was raw in Jake's eyes. His hands closed on his coat lapels; his fingers started to crawl inside. Scott knew he must have a shoulder holster there.

Scott took a long drink of his second Scotch. He grinned at Jake, a loose, easy grin, and he spoke just before those fingers snaked inside Jake's coat.

"But it does pay well, I hear. That interests me."

Jake stared at him; the upper part of his body froze, but his eyes were alive, and his brows furrowed for an instant.

He laughed then, a great guttural laugh that came from deep inside his keg of a chest. He dropped his hands and bent forward at the waist, slapping his knees. He wiped his eyes with a handkerchief and chuckled again.

"You're a card, Scotty, so help me! You're a real card, but you've got your

feet on the ground. The pay *will* be good, I promise you."

Scott said, "That's for me. Good pay I can always use."

Cairn handed him a piece of paper. "Tomorrow morning the man at this address will give you some milk that is supposed to have soured. You pick it up—but don't take it back to the dairy with you. You deliver it to Mrs. Laura Huntington, 47 Knob Hill Manor."

"Is that all?" Scott asked.

"That's all for this time," Cairn said. "I'll be around to make sure there are no slip-ups. You understand this is no game for amateurs."

Scott said, "I understand that, all right. Verne's the boy that didn't understand."

Jake stared a moment, and again his fingers slid toward the lapel of his coat. Then he caught himself, and the laugh came out again. "A card, Scotty! That's what you are. A real card! And if you want to shoot the dice a few rolls on the way out, the cashier will give you credit up to a grand."

"Thanks." Scott nodded instead of offering his hand, and went out, down the stairway, and out the entrance. Janis was waiting for him and he walked over and sat down. He smiled at her, but there was bitterness in his words.

"Jake's got a nice place up there. It looks like you. I could almost smell your perfume."

She stared at him in astonishment. "What!"

He said, "I mean it looks like money, easy money, just like you got for roping me in. It's all set now, and you did fine. I'm signed and delivered, and you can collect from Jake any day."

She said swiftly, "Scott, I didn't . . . I mean, well—I work for Jake and—"

He said harshly, "I told you, you did fine! You made me want you, and want money for you. You knew what you were doing and so did I—and if I fell a little too hard that's my lookout, and you and Jake can have a good laugh."

Her eyes were pleading, "I don't do *anything* with Jake, not even laugh with him." She put a hand on Scott's arm.

He knocked her grip loose. "You work for Jake. You did a job, and we've both got what we want. Let's leave it that way."

"Scott!" She put out a hand again.

**B**UT he was on his feet, moving toward the door. He slanted his shoulders through with a bitter swiftness, and moments later was out on the street. He didn't hail a taxi; he wanted to walk to get rid of some of the churning that was going on inside

of him. Halfway to his apartment, he stopped in a drugstore and called Dodge from a telephone booth.

When he came out it was all set. The payoff was to be tomorrow.

**H**E came to the designated house the next morning, glancing at his route book as though he needed to, playing a part as if all the eyes that watched him were really watching him on a stage. He racked four bottles of milk into his carrier and went around the house. The house had a big concrete-and-brick exterior, with French wrought iron, and expensive shrubbery all about. He went in at the back door, making like a milkman, and wondering if he really seemed like one, even if he had been doing this business for a year.

A scrawny little man in a yellow corduroy shirt came into the kitchen, and watched him unload the milk. He said, "Say, fellow, you gave me a couple of bottles of sour milk yesterday." With the words Scott felt his hands tightening on the handle of the milk-carrier.

"If you'll give them back I'll allow you credit on them."

The yellow-shirted little man swore. Then he said, "I'm afraid my wife threw them out."

Scott tensed. That meant it was off, all off. But he had planned for this—it meant he would carry the rack in his left hand when he came out, so that Dodge's men would not close in. He smiled at the little man, wondering what had gone wrong.

"If you don't have the milk I think I can arrange to credit your account. But please save it for me in the future."

The little man grinned at him, and soft footsteps sounded. Then Jake Cairn stood in the room, his big body almost blocking the doorway.

"Told you he'd play it cagey and smooth!" He turned to Scott. "I just wanted to see how you'd react to a surprise. You're a smart boy, Scotty, a real card."

The yellow-shirted man said, "I do recall that my wife put the sour milk in the box after all." He groped in the back of the refrigerator and gave Scott two bottles. Scott slid them into the rack. He was glad Jake was here; it made things end up clean. He put the rack in his right hand, and went out the back door. He had just got out when whistles shrilled, and the waiting men closed in. Sheriff Roan was there, with a gun in one hand, and Dodge. They were in, softly and efficiently—the action that of a well-planned machine.

Jake Cairn said, his voice full of false surprise, "What is this?"

That tone in his voice made Scott whirl and look at the man. Jake



"It's the nastiest business in the world," Scott said. "It's the kind of business no one but the devil would stoop to. It makes murderers and thieves and prostitutes. Why kid ourselves?"

wasn't nervous at all, and his eyes glittered back at Scott.

Dodge said, "We're onto this whole scheme, Cairn. This evidence plus Mrs. Huntington's testimony will put you where you belong. I think she'll talk after we lock you up."

Jake shrugged. "What in blazes are you talking about? All I do is give the milkman some sour milk and what happens? Coppers close in and talk Greek to me."

Suspicion seized Dodge now. He uncapped one of the bottles of milk Scott had picked up. There was no string on the cap. No evidence of a hidden package. He put a finger into the milk and tasted it. His eyes drifted to Scott, and he said, "It's sour, all right."

He checked the other bottle. "We'll have to run laboratory on it."

But he knew what they'd find, and he wouldn't meet Scott's eyes. Scott knew too; there would be sour milk, and nothing else.

Dodge gave up gracefully. "We'll not ask you to go with us, Mr. Cairn,

nor you, sir. We'll check the milk to be sure; but that needn't concern you, if it's only sour milk. It should take only a short time."

They started out. When they were gone, Cairn turned to Scott and said, "Cancel my milk deliveries, will you, boy?"

Scott shuddered, picked up the bottles and walked back to his milk truck.

He drove to the next house. The whole thing had suddenly become a nightmare. He was in line for just what Verne had got, and though the police would watch him for a while, give him some protection, Jake was not a man to forget. And now that he was warned, there wouldn't be much chance they would pick him up.

Scott went into the next two houses like a wooden puppet. His mind kept circling into fear, and he kept wondering now about tomorrow, and the day after, and how he could stay alive.

The rear made him careless. He came at last to Laura Huntington's house. She wouldn't be expecting dope, he thought; she was in on the

trick that Cairn had trapped him with. He opened the door and looked into Willy Sale's face. Willy leaned back against the sink. He had a gun in his hand, the muzzle pointed; and it stopped Scott and turned his legs to stone. The rest of Cairn's trick wasn't tomorrow, or next day. It was *today!*

Willy Sale said, "One peep and I'll blow your guts on the kitchen floor. Turn around and put your hands back."

Scott turned, and two bruises appeared from the other room. One of them slapped a piece of fine wire around his wrists and twisted it. The other muttered, "Stay smart, boy, smart and quiet!" then slapped a two-inch piece of tape across his mouth. He stared, horrified, as Laura came to the door and smiled at him. The pupils of her eyes looked strange. She was high-high and happy.

He found his wits then, and kicked out violently. His feet found a shin-bone, and he had the satisfaction of hearing it crack before Willy Sale laid the gun-barrel against his temple with skill, and he drifted down to the floor, conscious, but stripped of the desire to move. His head was a ball of fire, and he felt himself being handled roughly, like a bag of meal, while his milkman's whites were being stripped off.

Willy Sale said, "Make it snappy! They probably got an eye on him." The big man who had taped his mouth donned the milkman's whites and picked up the rack and route book. He was blonde; if he kept his head down, a hidden watcher would take him for Scott with no questions asked.

The man went out. Willy Sale and the other man now turned their attention to Scott. When they had him completely stripped, they tied him some more, using more of the wire they had used before. Then they took him to the bathroom and perched him on the edge of the tub, to watch while they cut up his underwear piece by piece, and flushed the pieces down the drain.

Willy Sale said, "You wondered about Verne—why no bloody clothes, and no blood. You'll see now."

Scott saw, all right. His stomach began to go queasy on him, and he swallowed.

THEY dumped him into the tub. The whole operation had taken perhaps thirty minutes. Now Willy Sale sat and looked at him, and after a bit he got a package of razor blades from the medicine cabinet.

He said, "Jake ought to be here soon, and now we got everything ready." He took the plug out of the bathtub drain.

Scott tried once to free himself from the wire, but it cut painfully into his

wrists, and hopelessness surged over him. He began to cramp from his position and time dragged out until it was forever.

The sound of a key reached them; then the front door opened and closed. Scott wondered if this meant he had a chance. His muscles fought the wire in a surge of hope.

Smiling, Jake Cairn walked into the bathroom. He glanced around at Willy Sale.

"The Huntington dame—did you give her the overdose?" he asked.

"Yeah. She passed clear out a few minutes ago. She'll be dead, in a few more. She'll never squawk on us."

Jake sat on the edge of the tub beside Scott. "Hand me a towel, Willy. I don't want to spot this suit." He took a razor blade in his hands, and smiled at Scott's taped mouth. He said, "I still say you're a card, Scotty; but when you play with me, I cut the cards."

He swooped down with the razor blade and cut a six-inch slash across Scott's chest. It burned so sharply that Scott screamed soundlessly out of a dry throat, and Jake moved in with the razor blade again.

Scott screamed again, but without

sound. His body was rigid under its wire bonds.

Then the door behind Jake was jerked open.

Dodge came in, his gun ready. "Better take it easy, Jake."

JAKE CAIRN whirled; his fingers dropped the blade and leaped under his coat. He had the gun half out when Dodge shot him through the chest. Sheriff Roan crowded past the narcotics agent, pressing Willy Sale and the other man back into the corner. He stripped the tape from Scott's mouth in a painful tearing of flesh, and bent to untwist the wire. Scott got out of the tub, found gauze and tape in the medicine cabinet. He fixed the cut on his chest.

Dodge said, "You'd better thank your luck for that girl of yours; she spotted the wrong milkman coming out of here and called us. She'd been worried about you and was watching you today. She saw you go in, and realized that the guy who came out wasn't you. Said he had his face hidden, but he didn't have shoulders wide enough to be you."

Scott straightened. He said, "I've got a hunch that all the narcotics you

didn't find in that other house are hidden around here somewhere."

Willy Sale moved nervously, and Scott looked into his eyes and knew the guess had been right. And as the police confirmed this, Scott searched through Huntington's closet for some clothes that might fit. He found some that were good enough and slipped them on. Dressed now, he turned to Dodge.

He asked, "Where's Janis?"

"Outside in her car," Dodge explained. "She's Verne Nix's half-sister. Swore she'd get the guys that got Verne—that's why she's been watching you all day."

Scott said, "The devil you say!" Then he wheeled and ran outside. He saw Janis behind the wheel of her gray automobile across the street. He crossed the street on the double, flung the car door open, and came up into the seat beside her, staring at her, suddenly unable to speak.

She cried, "Your lips, Scott! Your mouth! What have they done to you?"

"Nothing that won't heal." He was watching her now, wondering how to begin to explain how wrong he had been.

But she was explaining now, apologizing, as if she had to do that instead. "I didn't know what they were up to, besides gambling. At first, with Verne, it was just gambling, and I thought that was all they had in mind for you. I thought they planned for you to lose your money in the Golden Wheel. Then, after you were so bitter, I put two and two together and knew I'd helped Jake pull you into the dope racket."

HER eyes searched his face for some sign of understanding. She said, "You'll get your money back—they say there's a reward. Ten thousand dollars, Scott. What will you do with it?"

And now, at last he could speak. He took her shoulders and shook them gently, saying, "Who the devil cares about the reward?—It's you I care about."

She said again, as if she could not comprehend, "What will you do with the money?" But her eyes began to shine.

He stared at her, holding her shoulders. He said, "A house maybe, a farm—that depends on my girl. But a home somewhere."

She began to cry, and he stared at her without understanding. She said, crying, "You'll never believe this, Scott, but I can bake biscuits."

He tightened his arms around her saying, "Sure, honey, sure,"—because it seemed important to her. Personally right now, he didn't give a darn if she couldn't boil water.



"My, my! One doesn't see cavities like that very often!"

# ALABAMA DIVORCE

*Cafeteria Style*



• By TOM ROAN

**Least publicized of all divorce mills, Alabama grants an absolutely legal separation in two days—total elapsed time from your decision to the judge's—at a total of \$250.**

THE LITTLE MAN SHRUGGED and reached again for his bourbon. The old girl was a battle-axe, all right; she nagged, she whined, she threw assorted household articles at his head, she flew into reasonless, uncontrollable rages, and now she had taken to rifling his billfold.

"I'd divorce her in a minute," he moaned, "but who can afford to spend six weeks in Reno?"

It was then that a guy down at the end of the bar told him about Alabama—where, instead of six weeks, a divorce takes two hours. Alabama, where a working stiff from virtually any State in the union can shuck his mate in the time it takes to spend a weekend duck hunting. Alabama, where unlike some of the mail-order jobs from south of the border, a divorce is as legal as a Harvard lawyer can make it, and where the parting of the ways will stand up in any court in this land, and in Canada, Timbuctoo or the Sandwich Islands.

Alabama!

And, just as you may be doing right this minute, the little man brightened and asked one pointed, vital question: how long has this been going on?

The answer is that it's been going on for a long time, for a good many years, in fact. There is absolutely nothing new about it, the State's machinery for quickly severing an unhappy pair simply never having been commercialized or publicized. In truth, the trend in Alabama has been mostly the other way, with none of the lawyers, court officials or business people I interviewed showing even the slightest desire to turn the State into another Nevada, Mexico or Virgin Islands.

Yet the simple fact is that an Alabama divorce is a lot simpler, a great deal less expensive, and a far more practical matter than it is in virtually any other community favored by the victims of disunity. Any couple who have come to the decision that life together no longer can be endured are able to walk into a lawyer's office in Alabama at, let us say, one o'clock in the afternoon, and by three o'clock—and often sooner—they are divorced. And legally, with no worries about the possibility of the action subsequently being thrown out by another court, and the participants finding themselves right back where they started from; and possibly, by then, even being guilty of bigamy—if they've remarried.

No attempt is being made here to endorse this quick-action Alabama legal machinery; in fact, in view of the rapid rise in the divorce rate in the United States (which, by 1951, had seen one marriage out of every five hit the rocks), the desire on the part of the State's officials to play down the speed with which a marriage can be dissolved is to be commended.

Yet facts are facts, and they are no less so because of their having been brought to public attention.

Legal purists will be quick to point out, of course, that Alabama does have a 60-day waiting clause in its divorce law, which would seem to nullify the two-hour record already stated. But for all the effectiveness this 60-day clause has been shown to have, it might just as well never have been included in the law in the first place.

**F**OR example: Soon after Alabama's law was written in the books, two tenant farmers, from just across the Mississippi line, decided to take advantage of it. So, hitching up their mules, they loaded their wives and children into their wagons, drove across the State line, and each couple got its separation. So far, so good.

Once outside the courthouse, the two couples apparently held a caucus, decided to swap mates virtually in the shadow of the bench, and, while the kids and livestock yammered, and switched from wagon to wagon, their parents returned to the court and acquired new legal partners.

Immediately there was a hue and cry from the citizenry, and the two couples promptly were arrested, tried and found guilty of violating the 60-day waiting clause. Whether they ever were fined or served time for their misstep—or even if their new marriages were dissolved—seems now to be something no one in the State appears to know.

At once, however, another couple made a second test of the law. They were divorced, stepped outside into the arms of waiting hopefuls, and remarried. Reversing itself, the court held the latter marriages to be legal, and the higher courts sustained this decision. The 60-day waiting clause has, to all intents and purposes, been dead from that time on.

The joker in the clause, of course—a clause put into the law in the first place in order to give a divorced couple a cooling-off period in which to be sure they were convinced of their unhappiness together—lies in its very wording, in the provision which states "... that neither the plaintiff nor the defendant shall again marry, except to each other, until sixty (60) days after the date of this decree. If an appeal from the decree is taken within sixty (60) days, neither the plaintiff

nor the defendant shall again marry, except to each other, during the pendency of said appeal."

**B**UT—the blow that kills this clause is present in the provision that *both* the defendant *and* the plaintiff are supposed to appear in court, or be represented, in the defendant's case, by a notarized statement denying all the allegations set forth in the plaintiff's case and stating flatly that he or she does not wish to appear in court to defend himself against the action. However, once the latter waiver is signed, *the defendant has no grounds on which to file an appeal* once the decree has been granted!

Thus the defendant is held to have appeared in court, in person or through the legal notarized document, and therefore has signed away any right to an appeal, and therefore is completely divorced from the plaintiff the minute the divorce is granted.

How this works, in an actual case, can be seen from the account of a typical Alabama action, an action which some in this Southern State claim is far easier to put through, and days faster, than an application for a marriage license or a health certificate in some other communities.

**T**AKE the case of Bill——. Bill took off from New York one Thursday morning, landed in Gadsden that afternoon, and registered immediately at a boarding-house in a county seat a few miles from that Alabama city. His wife, Mamie, had stayed behind at her office job in Manhattan. Bill paid a week's rent of \$15 in advance at the boarding-house, a fee which entitled him to his room and three squares a day piled high on the boarding-house table.

On Friday morning, he was in a lawyer's office, where he stated his case, and a paper was prepared for his spouse Mamie to sign. This paper went out airmail to Mamie in Manhattan.

At two that afternoon, Bill was back in the lawyer's office, and at 2:15 they were in the courthouse. At 2:58, Bill emerged from the courthouse armed with his divorce, together with a copy for Mamie. When she had signed the airmailed paper and returned it to Alabama—probably by the morning mail the following Monday—she'd receive her copy of the divorce. At 9:15 that Friday night, Bill was on a plane out of Gadsden back to New York, thirty-six hours after he'd left his home to seek his freedom.

What had happened in the courthouse? Virtually nothing. Bill never did get into the courtroom or talk to the judge. Instead, a quiet little lady clerk took down his answers to the questions put to him by his lawyer in the presence of the clerk, and Bill

swore to their truthfulness and signed his name. The lawyer then carried the form on which these answers were written to the judge, in the latter's chambers, for signature. Copies of the decree immediately were affixed with the Alabama State Seal, Bill paid his fee (approximately \$16), and he was a single man again.

It so happens that Bill and Mamie had no children, but the procedure would have varied only slightly if they had. Another paper, this time one to be signed by both Bill and Mamie, stating exactly how the children were to be provided for and who was to have custody—and Bill still could have made his plane on time that evening.

Naturally, critics of this seemingly foolproof severing process can come up with any number of questions and complaints regarding it. Just where, they ask, and how did Bill establish residence as a citizen of Alabama? And how was he able to do it with but one short night in a boarding-house? I put these same questions to a veteran judge who sits in one of Alabama's busier courts, and who snorted defiance at my even daring to raise them.

"I hold that establishing a residence and premeditation in a murder case are one and the same under the law," he said. "Premeditation has been established as existing when the murderer pulled the trigger—a fifth of a second, in time! By that same token, a man or woman might drop out of the sky in a plane here one afternoon, take a look around, and honestly decide right there and then that this is where they want to spend the rest of their days. And they can be just as honest the next morning when they get on the plane and decide to go back where they came from."

**B**UT suppose, I asked him, a man comes to Alabama and applies for a divorce, declaring at the same time that he is a resident, but that his wife is elsewhere and is not a resident?

"There will be complications, naturally," the judge said. "And advertising and paper serving. Unless, of course, the lady decides to lie about it, going before a notary somewhere and swearing that she's a resident at the time she signs her waiver of contest."

But couldn't such a woman be prosecuted? I asked the judge.

"Yes," he said, "if somebody kicked up a fuss. But the husband himself would be the only one I can think of who would do that, and if he kicked he'd be apt to be in a bit of a spot himself. For he'd only be contesting his own divorce, while admitting at the same time a conspiracy to misuse the law."

Yes, but wouldn't that be called collusion? I asked then. Meaning fraudulent co-operation between—

I was interrupted by one of the most colorful displays of judicial invective I'd heard in a long career of sitting in courtrooms. In substance, the venerable jurist wondered what adjective I'd use to describe a great many of the divorces granted annually in my home State of New York.

"If that isn't collusion," he snorted, "I don't know the meaning of the word! Do you mean to tell me that even half the divorces granted in New York—with its one and only grounds being infidelity—actually involve unfaithfulness?"

"They certainly do not," he answered himself. "And before you go back to your precious editor with a tongue-clucking story about our divorce mill here in Alabama, first ask yourself which is worse—a clean and honest severance, in the time it takes to sign the papers, or one of your New York rigged divorces, complete with private detectives, shabby hotel rooms, phony assignments and paid witnesses?"

"As to the legality of our divorces, with or without the alleged collusion, collusion is legal in New York when the judges—if they have any intelligence at all—must know it's collusion. Any violation of the law must be contested before it can become a violation. And that includes murder, too! Somebody must sign a complaint, which is merely contesting one man's legal right to kill another.

"Law is what you make it, but our Alabama divorce law is just about as good as any you can find. Quick and sure, and it works. Why? Because we have only two people interested in each case, one watching the other, each generally interested only in breaking the chain binding them together because they no longer can stand being so bound."

I next asked the judge about reports of divorce factories mushrooming in some larger Alabama cities, and if he thought such a condition was possible under the present law.

"Anything is possible when people are desperate," he told me. "Men and women rob banks with the penitentiary staring them in the face. They kill, steal, lie and cheat, which is why we have jails. And they talk of people being divorced in Alabama without ever putting foot in the State, merely having some lawyer register them for a month at a hotel, and paying stand-ins to represent them in court.

"Yet do you think stand-ins never have been used in Nevada, or the Virgin Islands, or Mexico? If you do, you're just being stupid."

The question then was raised about speedy divorces, and if people in such

a hurry to shed their entanglements to each other couldn't be suspected of being up to some funny business.

"They're all in a hurry," the judge said. "Once they've made up their minds, it's a sprint to get it over and done with. The law's not supposed to be a detective, who must go poking and prying into backgrounds. As I've said, no one is guilty of a wrong until a complaint is drawn, the defendant brought to trial and the wrong established."

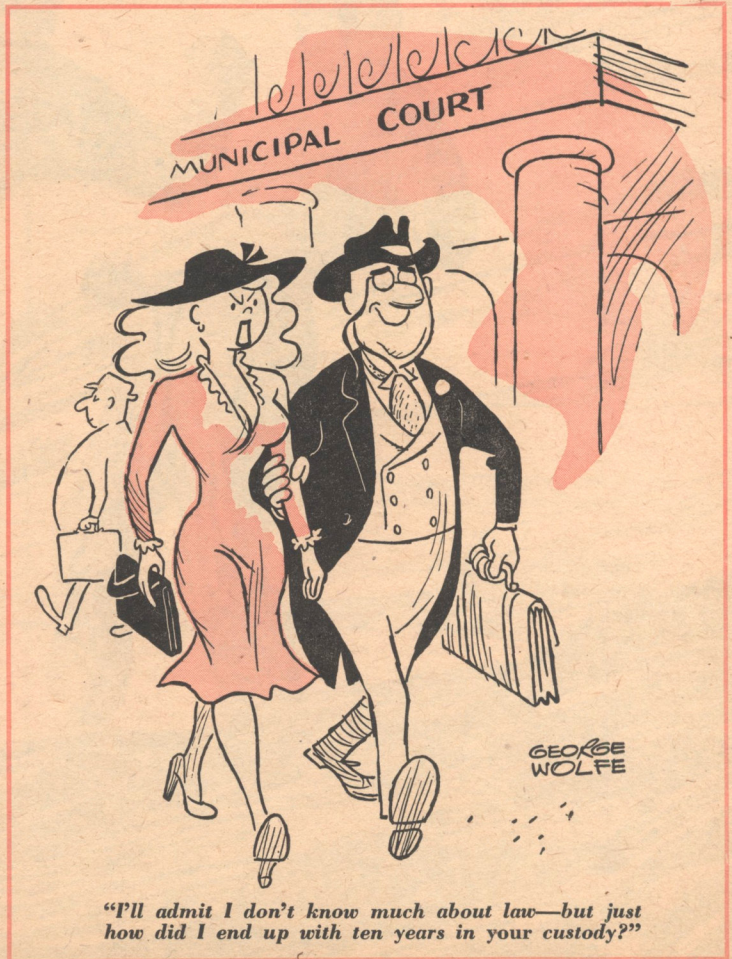
This pretty much stated the case for America's newest-found haven for the maritally unhappy. It can be done and it is being done, and the legality is as beyond question as any divorce can be when one considers that most marriages are solemnized with the injunction that "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Man is putting it asunder, all over the country, at a rate of one to five; and the feeling of Alabamans can be summed up as one of realism—if man

is bound to do it, he should be able to do it with a minimum of sham or subterfuge.

There can be no doubt that, regardless of the sentiment of thinking residents of the State to soft-pedal its rapid and reasonably painless divorce, the word is beginning to spread throughout the country, and one can foresee a day when such cities as Birmingham, Gadsden, Montgomery, Mobile, and others will be as well-known as Reno when it comes to offering solace to the broken-hearted.

Particularly if one considers the fact that a plane trip from cities as far from the State as New York can be financed for \$85, the lawyer's fee rarely totals more than another \$100, and the other incidentals hardly bring the total bill to more than \$250, the fact becomes obvious that more and more divorces are going to be granted in the magnolia country.

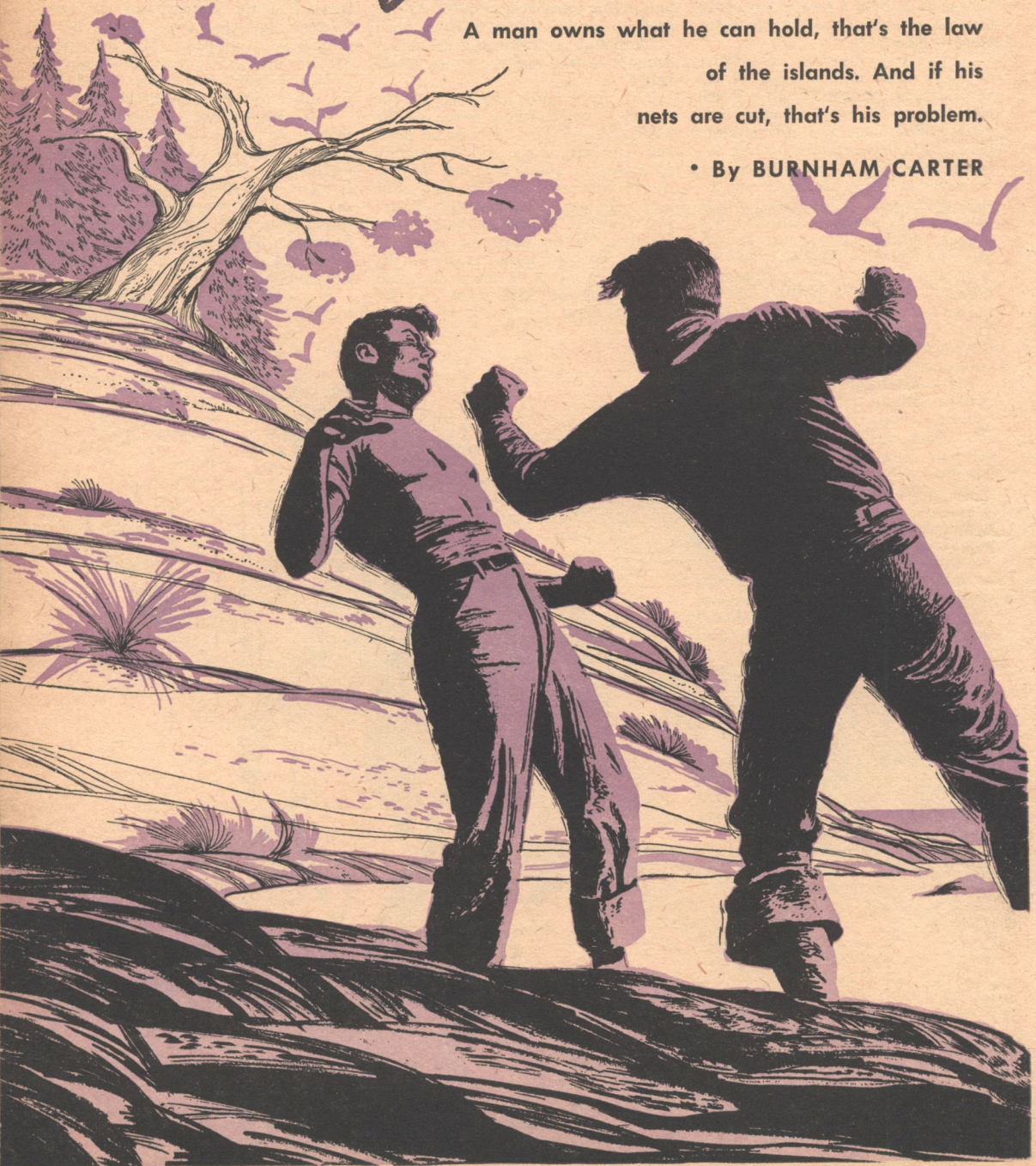
It is a fact which, for all its distress to the idealists, must be faced. •



# Law of the Islands

A man owns what he can hold, that's the law  
of the islands. And if his  
nets are cut, that's his problem.

• By BURNHAM CARTER





**S**HORTLY AFTER DAWN, the herring-boat *Betty B.* left Blue Island and headed for the mainland. It had some thirty baskets of herring scales, looking like molten silver, to deliver to the plant that extracted the pearl essence used in iridescent paints and certain plastics. The crew of four had been up all night setting nets in the cove and loading the herring into carrier boats. Barry Walker was too tired to eat the breakfast waiting for him in the galley. He flopped into his bunk, and woke five hours later as the *Betty B.* entered its home port of Hamden, Maine.

There was nothing to do for an hour while Captain Joe Downs delivered the herring scales and attended to certain repairs; so Barry strolled along the docks to Dan's Lunch for a late breakfast. He was a wiry, freckled redhead of 24, with blue eyes and an open, friendly face. He was feeling especially cheerful because at this hour the restaurant would probably be empty except for Doris Hawthorn, the counter waitress. Doris was one of the pleasant surprises of his return from three years in the Navy. When he had left, she had been just one of those giggly high-school girls, five years his junior, with chubby, loose-jointed arms and legs. Now she was a shapely blonde, with a clear pink-and-white complexion, and a poise and intelligence adequate to handle the wisecrackers who came into Dan's Lunch.

"Didn't expect you for several days," Doris said, and smiled.

"We blew a hole in the suction hose," Barry said. "And we were full up with herring scales. We're going back in an hour."

"Fishing's that good, then?"

"Fishing's good—if only the market holds up." He was making \$80 a day, on a share basis, and he hoped to clear \$3,000 for the season. He had \$3,000 already saved, and the great dream of buying an island and a boat—the one he had dreamed many a night in a Navy bunk—was drawing closer to reality.

"You may have some visitors out there this week," Doris observed, as she brought him eggs and coffee.

"Who might that be?"

"The Rabbs. Maybe I shouldn't tell you this—the boss doesn't want us to get involved in these fishing arguments—but I heard Jack Rabb say they were going into your cove."

The Rabbs, father and son, were waterfront bullies, always trying to push into somebody else's business.

"I don't think they'll like it in our cove," Barry said.

"Well, you watch out, Barry—those two are mean."

"I know. Thanks for telling me. Have you ever seen Blue Island?"

"Only from a boat."

"I'm thinking of buying it."

"What for?"

"To live on. It's got plenty of water, some pasture and a stand of

spruce. Man used to raise sheep there. There's a good harbor for a boat." He grinned. "Of course, I'd have to find a girl who would marry me, first."

"Be kind of lonely, wouldn't it?"

"Castine is only half an hour across the water. A person could run in for the movies or a dance at the Grange or what-all, any time. He could get one of those small Diesel power plants, so there would be lights and a refrigerator and a washing machine." He had a sudden picture of Doris hanging out the clothes, with the wind flattening her dress against her figure and blowing her pale-gold hair.

"Yes, it might be all right," Doris said. "Something all your own, with no one to bother. It'd be kind of exciting to own an island—a house and a boat and with the sea all around you. But you'd sure want to marry the right person."

"You sure would." His eyes involuntarily caught hers; they both turned quickly away. There was a moment of embarrassed silence.

"Gosh, this coffee urn's almost out of juice," Doris said finally, and began to work over it.

Some tourists came in, then, and the conversation stopped. Barry walked back to the docks. Like all small-boat harbors at the noon hour, this one seemed to doze in the sun. The boats rocked gently in their sleep, and the silence was broken only by the crying of the gulls at the sardine

Illustration by HERB SASLOW



packing plant across the water. Captain Joe Downs was filling the water-tanks and the other two members of the crew, George LeBlanc and Harvey Paine, were checking on the equipment. They cast off in a few minutes and on the way to Blue Island, Barry told his news about the Rabbs.

"I was expecting they'd show up," Joe Downs said. He was a weather-beaten man of middle age, one hand partly crippled with arthritis from too many cold, sea-drenched hours. "They must have heard we're doing well, so they want in on it."

"He ain't got no right here," George LeBlanc asserted. "It's your cove."  
"Not in law, it ain't," said Harvey Paine.

"I don't know what you mean by law," George said. "If you mean *police* law, there ain't never been police on these islands and there ain't never goin' to be. Here we settle our business ourselves. Any man who finds a spot for lobster or herring and sets out there regular can call it his own."

"He's right," said Joe Downs.

"We'll throw 'em out if they come," George growled.

But noting Harvey Paine's sly look, Barry felt Harvey would not assist.

The *Betty B.* arrived at Blue Island about 5 P.M., and anchored in the cove. The herring usually came in with the evening tide, any time between dusk and dawn. They went out again during the day. Why they did this, no one knew; the daily migration of herring was one of the many mysteries of the sea. At the proper time, when the herring were inside, the fishermen could shut off the cove with a seine. Along toward nine o'clock, Joe Downs and Barry moved about the cove in a motorized dory, occasionally stirring the water with a fifteen-foot stick. The herring were there, all right; Barry could feel them with the stick—hundreds of thousands of them. When disturbed, they

would rush to the surface, churning the water to a phosphorescent glitter.

"Plenty of fire," Joe said. "We'll set the twine."

With the four of them working from the dory, they stretched two seines, each 600 feet long, across the mouth of the cove. Then, in the enclosure, at a point where the herring seemed thickest, they made a circular pocket with another seine, about 60 feet in diameter. From this, in daylight, they would draw the herring to be loaded into the carrier boats. It was one A.M. before they turned in.

The morning was gray and windy with occasional spatters of rain. Hauling in the nets was wet work, and the men wore yellow oilskins and knee-length rubber boots. They first took up the shut-off net, opening the mouth of the cove. By that time two carrier boats from the packing companies—42-foot, cabined motorboats with two rectangular holds in their after-decks—had arrived and tied up alongside the *Betty B.*, now moored at the edge of the pocket. Inside the pocket, Barry, LeBlanc, and Paine dropped a purse seine from the dory. A cord ran through the rings at the bottom, and Barry wound it up slowly on a winch, closing the purse. The surface of the water began to boil with fish. From the *Betty B.*, Joe Downs, using a block and tackle, swung the 8-inch suction hose over the side and dropped the mouth into the purse. He started the loading motor, which sucked the fish through the hose into the scaler, where the scales were scraped off and washed into a net hung above the stern; the herring themselves passed on into the hold of the carrier boat alongside. As the pile of quivering fish mounted in the hold, a man steadily shoveled salt on it. On the dory, Barry and his crew pulled the slack of the net over the edge. It made a colorful picture; the white dory rocking to the net's pull,

the crew lined up along the gunwale in their yellow oilskins and colored jerseys, the churning silver pool of fish, the dark-green spruce of the island, the blue-gray sea—a picture which Barry never consciously noticed, while working, but which came to him at odd moments after hours. He never described it to anybody, but it was something he wanted Doris to see.

By afternoon they had loaded one carrier and had started on another when a rust-red fishing boat turned the point of the cove.

"Here come your friends," George LeBlanc said.

On board were the Rabbs and two others. After one quick glance, the crew of the *Betty B.* paid no further attention to their approach; only the three men on the carrier hailed it as it drew alongside. Matt Rabb jumped to the carrier deck. He was a stocky man with a thick-featured face and a semicircle of beard. He looked at the hold, one half of which was full of fish.

"Filling up fast," Rabb said genially. "How many boats you loaded this week, Downs?"

"Not so many," Downs said.

"Guess you do pretty well in this cove. Ought to be enough fish here for everybody."

Joe Downs had turned off the motor to move the suction hose to the other hold. "I'm the only one fishin' this cove," he said. "I've been fishin' it for the past ten years."

"About time you let somebody else in on it," Matt Rabb said. His son, Jack, a beardless and grinning edition of the father, joined him. The two crewmen, poker-faced and alien, were holding the boat against the carrier.

"I don't reckon on doin' that," Joe Downs said. "That's not the custom on this coast. I'm telling you now to get the hell out of here."

The three were standing near the side of the boat on a deck slippery with sea-water, salt and fish scales. The suction hose, its powerful vacuum still on, was suspended by the block and tackle near Downs' head. As the boat lurched a little in the choppy water, Matt Rabb grabbed the tackle cord, which flipped the business end of the hose into Downs' face.

Downs jerked away, his feet slipped beneath him, and he hit the gunwale, clawed wildly for a grip, and went over into the water between the heaving boats. Barry grabbed a boathook and fought to keep the craft apart. In his heavy oilskins, Downs sank beneath the water. Neither of the Rabbs made any move to help him. A carrier man leaped for a rope, dropped one end of it overboard. After an agonizing minute Downs reappeared,



sank again and finally seized the rope. He was hauled aboard, unable to utter more than a curse between gasps for breath.

The two Rabbs had prudently withdrawn to their boat. They drove it to the other side of the cove and dropped anchor. On board the *Betty B.* the men were momentarily silent under the shadow of an accident that might well have been fatal.

"They sure would have let you drown," a carrier man said. "Looks like they're going to be hard to move, too. If we could help you, we would."

Joe Downs nodded. He knew that the packing companies had ordered their carriers to remain neutral in any dispute over fishing rights.

After the job was finished and the carrier had departed, Barry was swabbing the deck with a mop when Captain Downs, having changed to dry clothes, joined him.

"Been thinking about this situation," Downs said. "We can't let the Rabbs settle down over there and say nothin' about it. That'll just encourage 'em to go further. On the other hand, we can't throw 'em out, neither. A couple of years ago I could stand up to Matt Rabb and order him out; but with this hand"—he glanced ruefully at the crippled member—"he'd have me stretched out on the deck in no time, colder than a mackerel. It's not that I'm scared, but I couldn't help you boys much."

"No," Barry said. "And Harvey Paine isn't likely to help us, either."

"No. Well, I'm going over to the Rabbs and tell 'em they can anchor here, but I don't want any nets put out."

"I'll go along with you."

"O.K."

They went in the dory. The Rabbs and the two crewmen lounged on the deck of their boat, eying them.

CAPTAIN DOWNS spoke from the dory. "Listen, Rabb—I don't know whether that duckin' I got was intended or not—"

"Sure was too bad you got wet, Downs," Matt Rabb said. "Wasn't it, Jack?"

"It hurt me to see it," Jack agreed.

Downs swallowed, but continued: "There's just one thing I want to say. You can stay here for the night, since you're here, but don't put a net down. If you put a net down, I'll ram your boat and sink it, so help me God!"

He motioned to Barry, and the latter accelerated the motor and started back before the Rabbs could reply. He didn't doubt—nor would the Rabbs—that Downs meant what he said about ramming the boat, serious as such an action would be.

That evening the *Betty B.* crew shut off the cove with a seine, as before,

and set a pocket inside it. In the fading light, the Rabbs watched them, exchanging humorous comments and bursting into guffaws of laughter; but they did not touch their own nets.

"We better set a watch," Downs said, when the work was finished about midnight. "Barry, maybe you'll take the first two hours. If you hear anything, turn the searchlight on 'em. If they're getting twine out, call me."

Beneath the starless sky, Barry could barely see the outline of his beloved island. He planned to build his house on it, himself—three rooms, to start. If he bought the land at the end of summer, he would set up a sawmill there, mill the lumber from his own spruce and let it dry until the next spring. Then he'd buy a boat and do his own fishing. He'd be free as the wind, and self-sufficient as his forefathers. He just needed somebody like Doris—no, not "somebody like." He needed Doris, with her sunny beauty and cheerful ways.

Because there was a wind, the night was full of small noises; but Barry noticed nothing suspicious from the Rabbs, until suddenly he heard the explosions of their motor. He switched on the searchlight and directed it toward them. They were moving out of the cove, which seemed strange at this hour. Then in the hazy light Barry descried a rope pulling taut from the boat's stern. He understood. He ran down to the cabin and shook Downs' shoulder. "The Rabbs are dragging an anchor across our nets," he said tersely.

Captain Downs stumbled on deck in his shorts. It was too late to do anything by way of either prevention or pursuit. The Rabbs' boat was just crossing the shut-off net. It was followed by a dark hissing snaky mass of water where the anchor had caught in the pocket seine and was dragging it. Then the anchor hit the cable of the shut-off net and stretched it in a long V behind the speeding boat. It broke with a "whup" sound and a wash of water; the boat sped away, and the broken masses of twine swayed on the water, supported by the cork floats.

"Three thousand dollars' worth of twine," said Downs. He sat down on the wet deckhouse and then stood up again, his hairy chest heaving. "Three carriers coming in tomorrow. They'll have to go back empty. That's 2000 bushels of herring lost, at a dollar a bushel."

It was brutal, Barry thought. He himself would lose around a hundred dollars, but the loss to Downs was much greater.

"We better pick up the twine and go back to Hamden," Downs said. "We'll call off the carriers, and mend the nets tomorrow."

It was a grim crew that took in the nets by searchlight and set off just before dawn for the home port. While Downs was at the wheel outside, Harvey Paine, lying on his bunk with a cigarette, blew the smoke out through his nostrils and said, "Captain ought to pay us our share money, anyway. Ain't no fault of ours the twine got busted."

"How can you get share money when there ain't nothin' to share?" George retorted.

DOWNS told them that if they finished mending the nets that day, they would have the next day off, until five o'clock. That was a free day for Doris, too, and Barry hastened to Dan's Lunch for a cup of coffee.

"How about going on a picnic with me tomorrow?" he asked. "I thought maybe you'd like to look over Blue Island."

She realized at once the importance of the proposal. "But wouldn't that be too far, Barry?"

"Not if we took the bus to Castine. The island is only half an hour from there. I've a friend who'll lend me his launch."

He was looking into her blue eyes. She had full red lips, which needed little make-up, and the rosy coloring of her face and the lustrous golden hair had a flowerlike freshness.

"Gosh, you're beautiful," he exclaimed.

She had parried plenty of compliments with equanimity at Dan's counter, but she blushed at this one, so direct and simple.

"Yes, I'll come," she told him.

That evening, after working on the nets for twelve hours, George LeBlanc departed to get drunk, Harvey Paine just walked away and Barry, with 5 hours sleep in the past 48, went to bed and slept soundly. When he woke, with the sunlight filtering through the grapevine at his window, he felt the excitement that he had used to feel as a boy, when the day held so much adventure that he could hardly get up fast enough to seek it.

He met Doris at the seven-thirty bus. Having been on picnics in small motorboats before, she wore blue jeans, and a blue shirt and sneakers, but this utilitarian costume did not seem to mar her appearance. In the open motor-launch they bounced and splashed across the bay toward the island. The herring cove was on the sea side, but it was rough around the point, and he landed the boat at a small pebbled beach on the lee shore. Behind it rose spruce woods, with a trail to the open field that topped the island. "You can get a really good look at it from there," Barry said. Despite his effort to be casual, his voice was excited. They went hand-

in-hand up the trail and emerged into a sun-flooded field, bright with blue and yellow flowers. They could see the winding lee shore of the island, and all around them the dazzling blue sea.

"Well, this is it," he said.

"It sure is a swell place."

"You could put a house right here—with a view, and still sheltered from the northeast. Good spot for a vegetable garden, too."

She smiled at him. "You've got it all figured out, haven't you?"

"Yes," said Barry softly.

THERE WAS a sudden silence. The sea-wind fluttered gayly in the grasses, and they looked into each other's eyes. Then he kissed her.

Her lips were fresh and sweet. Her eyes searched his face; then she slid her hand trustingly in his. They stood still, adjusting themselves to this extraordinary and wonderful estate. Some distance from the shore a fishing-boat was heading toward them. Barry had noticed it from the launch, a long way off.

"Looks like a carrier," he said. "Looks like one I know—the *Dolphin*. I wonder why it's heading out here?" A suspicion leaped into his mind. "Let's take a look at the cove."

They crossed the field to a fringe of trees that looked down upon the herding cove. The dull red boat of the Rabbs was anchored there.

"Better duck," Barry whispered.

Sharing a sense of adventure, they lay on their stomachs and peered at the cove. The Rabbs were taking up a net that shut off the cove mouth. Inside they had set a large pocket seine, full of fish, ready to be loaded when the carrier arrived.

"Stealing our fish!" Barry murmured. "They're going to load all they can while we're away."

Barry saw Harvey Paine working with them and realized grimly how the Rabbs had found out the *Betty B*. was taking the day off. He felt anger rise in him like a wave of heat. "I can't let them get away with that," he declared.

"But there isn't anything you can do, Barry."

"Yes, there is. I'm going to open that pocket. I'll take the launch and come in alongside that carrier where the Rabbs can't see me. I'll open the pocket and be away before they can do anything. I'll pick you up off the ledge on the point." He looked into her gravely questioning blue eyes. "All right?"

"Gosh, Barry, I don't know—well, if you say so."

He leaned forward, kissed her quickly; then he ran back across the field and down to the shore. He started the launch and headed for the carrier

*Dolphin*, waving to the Captain. "Coming in with you," he shouted. He brought the launch close to the side away from the Rabbs, where it would be concealed from them. The *Dolphin* skipper would assume that Barry was lying close for protection from the rough water around the point. As they entered the cove, the *Dolphin* proceeded to the Rabbs' boat about 200 yards away, while Barry dropped off at the pocket seine and began working at the rope-knot that tied the two ends of the seine together. He figured there would be two or three minutes before anyone saw him, another two or three minutes before anyone realized what he was doing, and still another few minutes before they could start the dory after him. That should be ample time.

The knot in the heavy rope was wet, and the launch bobbed so much that it was hard to work it. He heard a shout, and then another, an angry one. They had seen him—but he got the knot untied, flung one end aside, and held the other while he ran the launch ahead to open the gap. Within a minute, half a million fish would be on their way to the open sea. With a laugh, and a wave of his hand at old Matt Rabb, Barry opened the throttle and roared off. A little way out, and he saw the running figure of Doris near the point.

DORIS waited where Barry had left her, seeing his launch pick up the *Dolphin*. Then she lay down by the fringe of trees, so that she could watch what happened in the cove. After the shut-off seine had been picked up, Jack Rabb got into the dory and went to shore, with a jug to be filled at the spring. As the *Dolphin* came around the point, Doris realized that Jack Rabb, from his position on land, would have a full view of Barry's launch. At the moment Rabb was faced inland, stooping over the spring; but in a minute he would straighten and would turn—and Barry would be lost. There was no time to weigh the decision which leaped into her mind.

"Jack Rabb!" she called.

He looked up in surprise, and a smile of pleasure spread over his face.

"Doris! What you doin' here?"

"Just visiting the island."

"Well, that's swell. Come on down."

"I can't, Jack. I have friends."

"Well, hell, I'll come up, then."

"Better not bother," she called, but he had already started up the path to the plateau, and perhaps this was better, since it drew him away from the cove.

He was puffing a little when he joined her, because he was beginning to put on weight.

"Nothin' could be nicer than findin' you on an island," he said.

His eyes roved over her figure, and there was a glitter in them which frightened her. She had dealt with rough men before, but in situations where help could be summoned if necessary. Now she was utterly alone.

"If you're going to be hauling hering, I might bring my friends down to see it," she said.

"Where are they?" He scanned the field suspiciously.

"Down on the other shore. They'll be coming up soon."

"Well, let 'em stay there. I don't care about them—only about you. Why, hell, Doris"—he took her hand, and tightened his grip when she tried to pull away—"you can't come all the way out here without givin' me a kiss."

From the cove Doris heard a shout. Barry must have been spotted.

"Oh, yes I can," she answered. "I'm not kissing people on Fridays."

"That's where you're wrong," he said harshly. He pulled her to him. His hot sweaty face pushed down on hers as she twisted desperately. From the cove there was another shout, louder, and Matt Rabb's voice calling "Jack!"

Jack Rabb hesitated a moment, and Doris wrenched herself free, turned and ran across the field.

She hoped he would stop to see what was happening in the cove, but his blood was up, and he ran after her, swearing. Ordinarily he could have caught her, but he was in rubber boots, and she was wearing blue jeans and sneakers. On the downhill trail through the woods the clumping feet seemed nearer. Then she was on the beach, with the sea empty before her and no sign of Barry. She started toward the point, as he had told her to do; then, realizing that she would be cut off, she turned wildly in another direction. Rabb caught her sleeve. His big hand closed crushingly on her wrist. "Take it easy, girl," he said between panting breaths. "It ain't that bad!" He looked up and down the beach. "Don't see those friends of yours. How the hell did you get here, anyway?"

"Let me go!" Doris gasped. She reached down for a rock, but he pinned the arm to her side.

"Take it easy, I said," he ordered.

OVER his shoulder she saw Barry rounding the point. "Barry!" she screamed. Although some distance away, Barry either heard her, or her struggles caught his eye, for the launch pointed toward them.

"So that's it," Rabb said with a leer, unmoved by her efforts to break away. "You and that Navy boy thought you had an island all to yourselves!"

He released her with a push that set her down on the beach. The launch came in, roaring. A few feet

out, Barry shut off the motor and jumped, as the launch hit the shore. "Take care of the boat," he cried to Doris. He stepped toward Rabb, struck a glancing blow on the other's chin, and took one on the shoulder. He had already decided on his strategy, on the way to shore. He was no match for Rabb in straight fighting; for he was 20 pounds lighter and not as strong; but he was in better condition, and he noted at once that the other was still short of breath from his run. Also, Rabb was hampered by the rubber boots. Barry began to pepper him with blows, retreating slowly, in a circular direction, avoiding any close encounter.

Doris seized the painter of the launch and pulled the boat in till it grounded. Weak and shaken, she turned to watch the spectacle, which was as old as history—the primitive combat of two men fighting over a girl on a beach. Barry, wary and quick, struck and dodged in silence; Rabb, bigger and slower, moved after him, swearing now and then, his thick arms moving with power. One blow caught Barry on the cheekbone, dazing him; but he backed away until his vision cleared. He hit for the stomach; jab and duck away; jab and duck away; Rabb began to breathe hard.

DORIS picked up a piece of driftwood and swung it against Rabb's ear from behind. His hands flew up involuntarily, and Barry drove his fist into the exposed stomach with all his might. Rabb grunted and staggered; his left arm circled Barry's neck, and the two men went over together, Barry on top. Rabb's right arm, seeking ground support, was caught between his falling body and an outcrop of rock. Barry heard the bone crack. He stood up. Rabb got to his feet, holding his arm and shaking his head; then he turned and walked away without a word.

Barry drew a slow, luxurious breath. "I guess that finishes the Rabbs for the summer," he said. "Are you all right, honey?"

"Yes."

"How did he happen to find you?"

She explained, and his spirits soared: she had run the danger for his sake; surely she must love him a little, anyway!

"I'm beholden to you," he said.

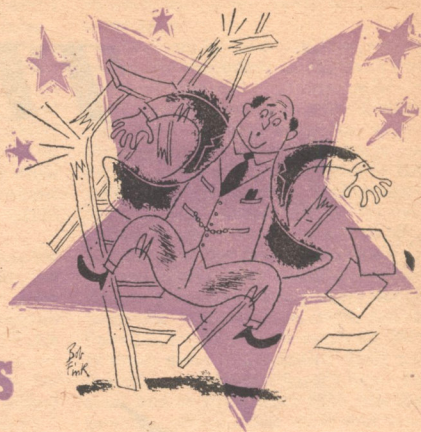
"That's all right."

"We better start back in the launch, and you can rest." He put an arm around her and helped her into the boat.

"After all this, do you think you could live happily on an island?"

She looked at him with love and amusement in her eyes. "I guess I could, with just you on it," she answered.

## Costly Chuckles



THE LEGAL PROFESSION, for all its gloomy-looking books and complicated documents, has its lighter moments. Getting a laugh from the jury or spectators is almost a national pastime, and unexpected ad libs have broken up dozens of trials and changed the course of many cases.

A good many times the laughs are at the expense of a lawyer, and often it's the lawyer's own fault. In a Tennessee trial, for instance, the defense counsel shook his finger at a witness and asked, "Are you suggesting that my client is a thief?"

"I ain't sayin' he's a thief, suh," the lanky mountaineer replied, "but if I was a chicken I'd sure roost high."

In another case, a murder trial at Richmond, Virginia, the District Attorney was doing the questioning. The witness was exceedingly cooperative, but insisted on addressing his answers to the D.A. himself. The D.A. instructed him to speak to the jury.

The witness looked the jurors over one by one, nodded affably, and said, "Howdy!" It broke up the court.

Spectators like nothing better than to see a cocksure lawyer brought down to earth, and one upstate New York attorney got put in his place when he started bearing down on a witness.

"Look," he purred, waving a document in the man's face, "just keep in mind that you're under oath—and then tell me that's not your wife's handwriting."

The witness was unperturbed. "It ain't," he said.

"Doesn't it look like her handwriting?"

"No, it don't," replied the witness.

"Do you mean to sit there under a solemn and binding oath and tell me that this doesn't even look like your wife's handwriting?" the attorney snarled.

"Sure do," the witness responded.

At that point the lawyer lost his temper. "What makes you so positive?" he shouted.

"My wife," the witness said matter-of-factly, "never learned to write."

The last laugh, of course, doesn't always go to a witness. It's a rare witness who can steal the show from a top-drawer attorney, and if he does make an error a clever attorney will turn even that to his own advantage.

In one civil case, Lloyd Stryker was defending a woman who was being sued by a maid who had fallen off a small stepladder. The maid's attorney insisted that the ladder was rickety and unsafe. Stryker insisted it wasn't and to prove his point he stood the ladder in front of the jury and climbed up. It held him. Then, to clinch the point, he jumped on the ladder. It crumpled like matchwood.

Stryker picked himself up, let the laughter subside, and said, as though he had rehearsed the incident, "You see, gentlemen, how solidly that stepladder was built. A big fellow like me had to jump on it with all his weight to break it."

Stryker won the case.

—W. E. Golden

# THERE ARE

• By LESTER DAVID

Ocean monsters, which science explains became extinct eons ago, have recently been sighted in the seas.

Can they *all* be hoaxes?



Illustration by RAY HOULIHAN

# SEA SERPENTS!

**I**T HAPPENED IN CALM SEAS about 100 miles off the coast of North Carolina, The *Santa Clara*, of the Grace Line, was steaming at 18 knots through the Gulf Stream, bound for South America. Cape Look-out was due west. The hour was noon.

Suddenly the vessel shivered from bow to stern. Third Officer John Axelson, on watch at the time, looked sharply over the rail. An incredible sight met his eyes.

A mammoth *Something* was thrashing in wild fury about 20 yards astern, churning the crystal-clear seas into ugly, dark red foam. Axelson stared in utter disbelief, then bellowed for help. The captain and two other officers came running.

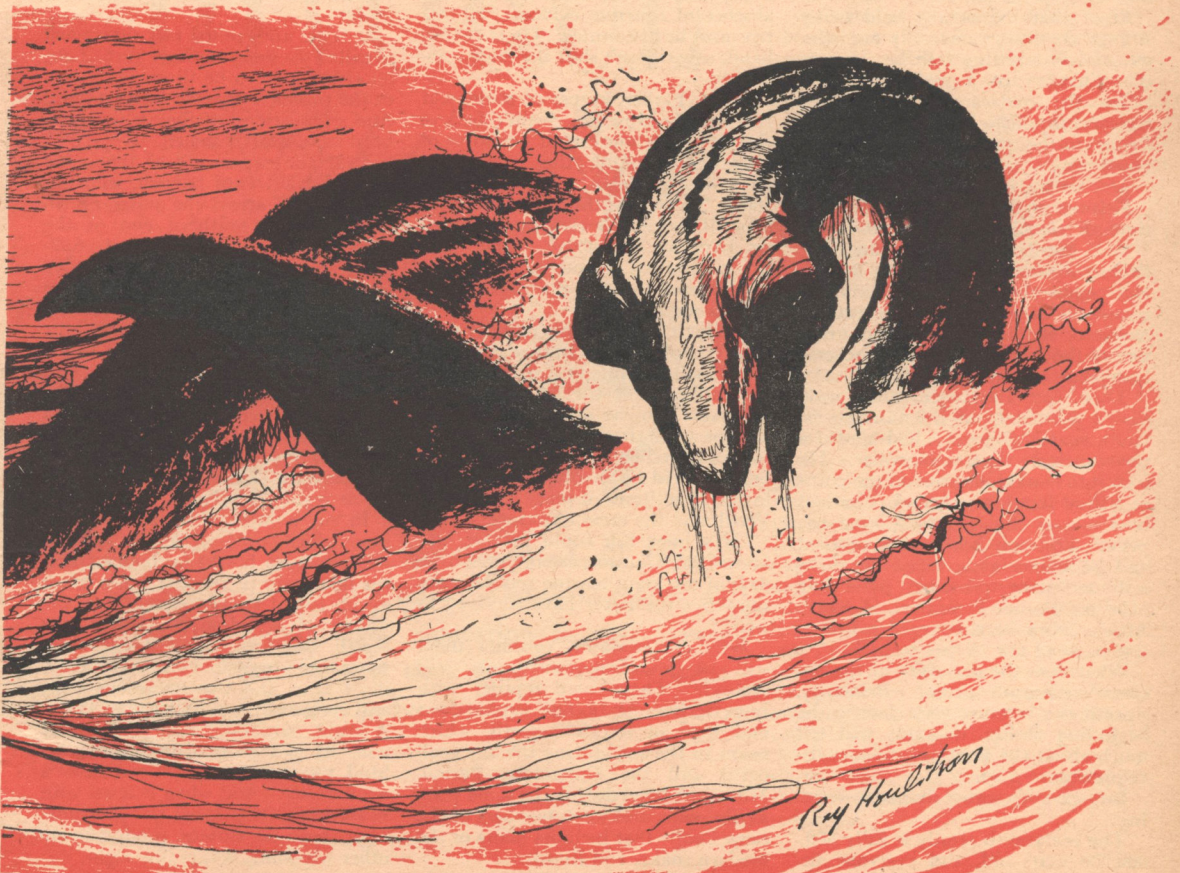
Clearly and unmistakably, they saw a fearsome monster, with a smooth, shiny body fully 45 feet from tail to snakelike head, and three feet thick. The neck

alone was more than a foot-and-a-half in diameter, and the head itself was at least five feet long!

There was no doubt in the minds of the witnesses. The *Santa Clara* had actually run squarely into a sea serpent, one of those fabled nightmare creatures reported from time to time. The ship had slashed it to ribbons with the propellers, and now it was shuddering in its death throes, blood gushing from countless wounds.

Finally the huge thing disappeared beneath the wide crimson pool, and the ship's officers put the whole astonishing episode on record.

First, a wireless message was flashed to the United States Hydrographic Office on December 30, 1948: "Struck marine monster either killing or wounding it. . . ." Latitude and longitude were given, followed by a description of what was seen and who saw it.



And an official entry of the occurrence was made in the *Santa Clara's* log.

The existence of unknown beasts such as this in the seas has been talked about since the beginning of recorded history, and doubtless before. Seafaring men and landlubbers have come back gasping with tales of horrible monsters of all sizes and shapes rising from the vastnesses of the oceans.

Centuries ago people believed, but in modern times it has become fashionable to scoff. And the *Santa Clara's* saga, while it caused a global stir, nevertheless suffered the same fate, despite the visual evidence of those who saw. No real proof, people said. No sea serpent ever has been captured alive or dead; no carcasses ever have been washed ashore. Nothing has been presented that could be touched, smelled or seen, except the word of those who looked on them, and some disputable photographs. And no pictures had even been taken of the *Santa Clara* Thing.

But something amazing has just happened.

A sensational zoological discovery has just rocked the scientific world, and as a result many experts now say that sea serpents can exist!

Proof that the oceans hold many strange creatures came only last winter, and in startling fashion. It was the discovery of a prehistoric fish, called the coelacanth (pronounced *seal-a-canth*), which scientists had believed to be extinct for 75,000,000 years!

FINDING of the fish climaxed a lifetime of ceaseless hunting for Prof. J. L. B. Smith, a noted ichthyologist of Rhodes University, in South Africa. He spent years in the chase, walking thousands of miles along the eastern seaboard of Africa, and distributing tens of thousands of leaflets in several languages, to brief the natives.

Then, last December, came news that a fisherman off the Comoro Islands, near Madagascar, had landed a coelacanth in 65 feet of water. He took it to market and was on the point of selling it, when a friend, who had read one of the leaflets, spotted the prize. Professor Smith was notified and he immediately raced out in a military plane provided by Prime Minister Daniel F. Malan, of South Africa. Now he is engaged in intensive study of the "living fossil."

What does the discovery of the ancient coelacanth mean? Primarily, since it is a creature very close to the beginning of life, its study will tell much about the first evolutionary development of man.

But there is another dramatic meaning:

The coelacanth family is fully 300,000,000 years old, and everyone be-

lieved that all its species had passed cleanly and completely from the scene 75,000,000 years ago.

But now one has been caught swimming in the sea, and it is exactly as though a living dinosaur had been found lumbering through a forest in New York or California!

The whole point is that if an aged-old species of fish, that belonged to the prehistoric era, has been found in modern times, why can't others that lived just as long ago—or even longer—still be around? This one is only a six-foot, 100-pound specimen, but there were others of its own time, many yards larger and infinitely more horrendous. If one ancient thing survived, why couldn't others?

Christopher W. Coates, the well-known ichthyologist who is curator and aquarist of the New York Zoological Park, the famed Bronx Zoo, declares flatly that "it's quite possible."

"We don't discount the stories of sea serpents one bit," asserts Mr. Coates, "and the discovery of the coelacanth certainly lends substance to the belief that there may be other strange things in the oceans."

Not all scientists are convinced. Many take the attitude that, in the absence of concrete evidence, all stories must be discounted. On the other hand, others don't shut the door completely.

H. W. Parker, keeper of zoology at the British Museum, doesn't believe there are any more land creatures of long ago roaming the unexplored parts of the world. "However," he states, "in the depths of the sea there may still be gigantic creatures of which we have no knowledge. And, with this possibility, remote as it may be, it is unwise to deny the existence of the sea serpent."

A. Hyatt Verill, in his recently-published book, "The Strange Story of Our Earth," points to a parallel with the discovery of the coelacanth. A few years ago, he says, fishermen off the coast of Africa netted a fish of a species called ganoid, which scientists believed had been completely extinct for many millions of years. And then Verill asks the same question:

"If a huge fish could survive, unknown and unsuspected, since the days of the giant marine reptiles, why shouldn't the latter have survived as well?"

Why, for example, couldn't there still be monstrous mosasaurs still around? These were reptiles with huge serpentine bodies, gaping jaws and rows of ferocious teeth, which swam in the seas during the age geologists call the Cretaceous Period. Mosasaurs lived during the same years as dinosaurs and were members of the same family that includes many of the modern snakes and lizards.

Mosasaurs, they say, have been extinct for 80,000,000 years. But coelacanths, they also said, had been extinct for nearly as long.

And why couldn't there be a plesiosaurus—or several dozen or several hundred—in the seas? The plesiosaurus, a product of the Mesozoic age, was a 60-foot monster, with a comparatively small head at the end of a long slender neck. It had two paddles and a black, smooth, leathery skin.

A number of scientists, in fact, believe that persons who have reported seeing sea beasts may actually have caught sight of this survivor of the age of monsters. They point out that the reports, from widely-scattered areas of the world, have a curious pattern—the serpents spouted water from their nostrils and moved with a peculiar sort of vertical undulation. Now, scientists know that the plesiosaurus *did* spout, and they explain that the undulations could very well be the humping and wrinkling of the reptile's hide. More, other features described, such as the paddles and long neck, tally remarkably.

**B**UT let's stop short and make this point:

It is an undisputed fact that many so-called sea monsters have turned out on closer look to be illusions, hoaxes or the products of vivid imaginations. And even scientists themselves have been momentarily fooled.

Take the experience of the noted naturalist Dr. Paul Bartsch, who was looking idly across the water off Sitanki, in the southern end of the Philippines, one late afternoon. Suddenly he started visibly—ten or twelve loops, each as round as a barrel, were projecting from the sea and stretching for a considerable distance. Nothing he had ever seen looked more like a sea serpent.

But nothing could be less of one. When the weird thing finally turned in Dr. Bartsch's direction, it became a series of porpoises playing leap-frog or follow the leader, and breaking water at regular intervals!

In any number of cases, a frightful beast which dozens of persons saw and swore was an honest-to-goodness horror of the deep, actually was a giant squid, found fairly frequently in the waters of Scandinavia and off the North American coast. These sometimes come in 50-foot sizes, with eight short arms and two enormous ones, and are generally cylindrical in shape. A squid, swimming along the surface with its two great arms trailing behind, presents the perfect picture of a sea monster. And when it floats with head down, its pointed tail protrudes high above the surface, producing another alarming, serpentine sight.



In other instances, flights of sea owl or brood ducks have been mistaken for large snakes skimming over the water. Basking sharks, which have a habit of swimming in pairs, one directly behind the other, can appear for all the world like a monster. Then there are ribbon fishes, which grow to 80 feet, and nemertines, which attain 45 feet. Whales, clumps of seaweed and even just ripples on the water often have been translated into sea serpents.

But, as Mr. Parker of the British Museum points out, when all these possibilities have been explored, "there still remain a number of independent and apparently credible stories which are not satisfactorily explained."

Stories such as the searing adventure of two young men who were duck-shooting on Pender Island, in Vancouver, B. C., not many years ago: One took a bead on a bird, hit his mark, and the target dropped to the water. The youths started forward, then drew back in speechless, motionless shock.

Because, as they looked, a grotesque head reared from the water—a head vaguely resembling a caricature of a horse. The mouth opened, seized the duck in its teeth, and then the object disappeared. But not before displaying part of an enormous, two-foot-thick body of grayish-brown.

Had the two youths been the only ones to view it, there might be considerable doubt about the accuracy of what they observed. But a week later, *more than a dozen workmen* saw the same thing! A ship went into the area, and its captain and mate saw it. And, finally, even an official of the Canadian government caught sight of it.

Could they all have erred? Or is there something huge, something strange, something prehistoric dwelling in these waters of the northern Pacific today?

**A**ND what about the experience of the freighter *Pecos*, in 1934, which paralleled that of the *Santa Clara*?

The *Pecos* was plowing through the Gulf of Mexico on a mid-February night in 1934, when a jolt shook the ship. The lookout peered over the rail in the darkness and called to Capt. L. Baker:

"Something's hanging on our bow, sir. Can't make it out."

The captain ran over and shone a beam downward. There, athwart the bow and almost cut in two, was a spotted gray-and-brown animal which fitted into no known category. It was more than 35 feet long and five feet thick. "Reverse the engines," the skipper called. The ship backed up—and the object dropped into the sea.

In the same year, the liner *Mauretania's* captain made this cryptic entry in his log: "Sighted sea monster headed S.W.; 1:20 p.m." It was on January 30 that S. W. Moughton, the ship's senior first officer, caught sight of the beast and summoned others of the crew. They all agreed it was 65 feet long and 6 feet across, was a shiny jet black, and traveled at high speed.

**E**VEN more remarkable was the adventure of Capt. R. J. Cringle, of the Natal Line vessel *Umfuli*, who actually played tag with a sea monster!

The *Umfuli* was en route to the Cape of Good Hope, at the southern tip of Africa, when a mammoth object was seen speeding across the water. Glasses were leveled, and the skipper and crewmen stared long and hard. It wasn't a ship, nor a whale, nor anything they ever had seen before. It was an animal.

The captain ordered the ship put about.

"Chase that thing!" he roared.

The race began. Slowly the vessel began closing the gap and now the object could be viewed clearly. The body was many yards long and had three distinct humps, while the neck was long and slender and the skin leathery. It looked as though the ship would soon catch up; but suddenly the monster began increasing speed and drew away.

All day the race continued, the beast alternately slowing down, then flashing forward. Night fell and the game ended at last with the sea monster lost in the darkness.

But during the dramatic chase, the captain had an opportunity to make a drawing of the thing. When he brought it ashore, together with his amazing story, experts were dumfounded.

Because the picture he sketched showed a monster which bore an almost identical resemblance to a plesiosaurus, the prehistoric monster supposedly extinct, in these many millions of years!

Perhaps the most famous one-shot appearance of a sea-something, the first instance that set the entire world buzzing, occurred when the British corvette *Daedalus* was homeward bound from the East Indies, more than a century ago. It was in October, 1848, between the Cape of Good Hope and St. Helena, that Capt. Peter M'Quhae and his crew got the shock of their lives.

The object was first seen by a midshipman, who uttered a strangled cry for Lt. Edgar Drummond, officer of the watch. Drummond, eyes bulging, at once summoned Captain M'Quhae. The captain made careful observations, took careful notes. The very precision with which he handled the

entire amazing episode lent enormous credence to the report he ultimately made.

When the *Daedalus* reached port, M'Quhae submitted a full statement of the facts to the Admiralty, in which he described precisely and in complete detail exactly what was seen. The animal, he wrote, was 60 feet long, dark brown in color, with white areas around the throat, no fins and something like the mane of a horse on the back of a long, thin neck.

Did it come close to the ship? It did.

"It passed rapidly," M'Quhae stated, "but so close under our lee quarter that, had it been a man of my acquaintance, I should easily have recognized his features with the naked eye."

Anticipating charges of hoax and sheer imagination, the skipper concluded:

"It was an actual living body, coolly and dispassionately contemplated. I deny the existence of excitement or the possibility of optical illusion."

At once a global furor exploded. The statement was duly incorporated

Fishing is a delusion  
entirely surrounded by liars  
in old clothes.

—Don Marquis

into the files of the British Admiralty, where it lay until a clerk unwittingly destroyed it in the process of file-cleaning. However, it remains on record in the pages of the *Times*, of London, which published it in full.

Paleontologists—scientists who study fossil evidences of life in other periods—were divided, and so was the general public. M'Quhae was hailed as a hero, and lambasted as a fraud. The most famous naturalist of the time, Sir Richard Owen, led the opposition, suggesting that the skipper, not being a trained zoologist, probably had seen a huge sea elephant, rather than an unknown monster. But M'Quhae stood his ground. He stoutly asserted that he knew a sea elephant when he saw one—and this was different, completely and terribly different.

There is no doubt that the most celebrated of all sea question-marks is the monster reported to make his habitat in Loch Ness, the large freshwater lake in the Scottish Highlands. He's been affectionately dubbed *Nessie*, and has almost single-handedly made a great tourist center out of the region. People come just to catch a glimpse, and *Nessie* obliges—he's been spotted innumerable times.

Many people don't have much faith in *Nessie's* existence. It was only re-

cently that the British Broadcasting Corporation conducted a trial via television, complete with bewigged judge, learned counsel and jury, on the question: Does the Loch Ness monster exist?

Alex Campbell, a reporter for the *Inverness Courier*, kicked off the proceedings by announcing that he had seen the monster, and he told what he had observed; then witness after witness paraded before the cameras. Many said Nessie looked like an overturned boat, while others described him as a series of humps, a small head held high on a thin neck, or a long, serpentine creature. Most agreed that he moved at high speed and left a long, churning wake.

EVERY theory was explored—that Nessie was a small whale, a seal, a giant eel, water ripples or just mass hallucination. A zoologist from London's Natural History Museum took the stand and expressed strong doubts about Nessie.

And then came the decision: Case not proven, Nessie ruled out of existence.

But, unfortunately, Nessie just wouldn't stay ruled out. He keeps showing up, regularly and disconcertingly.

The Loch Ness monster first hit the world's headlines in 1933, when a new motor road was built along the shores of the Loch. Arthur Grant, a veterinary student from the University of Edinburgh, was riding toward home one night on his motorbike, when a large animal reared up directly in front of him.

"I was almost on it," he stated afterward, "when a small head on a long neck turned in my direction and the object, taking flight, made two great bounds, crossed the road and plunged into the water." After that, the monster appeared frequently, and was sighted 20 times in just one four-week period.

Nessie broke into the news in a variety of other ways, too. In 1938, Donald John Munro, a Scottish naturalist and explorer, tried to form a Loch Ness Monster Company, for the purpose of finding out once and for all what it was all about. But he got no help and soon gave up. In 1941, one of Mussolini's pilots returned home and announced that he had bombed the Loch Ness monster out of existence.

And the climax—the final revelation that should have explained everything—came in 1950, when a British naval officer told what he thought was all. It was this:

The Navy, he asserted, laid some 300 horned mines in Loch Ness, in strings of eight for testing purposes, back in 1918. When they surfaced,

they rolled over once or twice, giving the impression of a living organism. "At a distance," he said, "they make a fine monster."

That was supposed to be that, especially since the British Admiralty subsequently confirmed the story.

But what the British officer either didn't know, or forgot to consider, was the inescapable fact that people had been actually talking of a monster in Loch Ness as far back as the Seventh Century!

The first mention is found in an account of St. Columba's visit to the province of the Picts. When the saint arrived at the river Nesa, he was told that an aquatic monster had just killed a man. St. Columba ordered another Pict to dive into the water, and, when the monster emerged, he made the sign of the cross. Then, the ancient account states, the beast fled in terror.

After this, the monster was unreported for more than a thousand years. In 1885, the Duke of Portland made mention of the fact that his people had been whispering in awe for some



What this country needs is dirtier fingernails and cleaner minds.

—Will Rogers



time about a "horrible great beastie" in the loch.

If Nessie was supposed to be 300 horned mines after 1918, what was he before the mines were planted?

And shouldn't we take the word of *Nature*, one of the most careful of British scientific journals, which has asserted that something is in the loch—a creature which if not unusual in its own habitat, is unusual in the surroundings of a Highland fresh-water loch."

Who can say for a certainty what dwells or what dwells not in the deep blacknesses of the oceans, which reach a depth of more than seven miles, more than the height of the highest mountain peaks? Once the larva of an eel was fetched from these mysterious regions—a larva fully six feet long! From this fact, a science writer for *The New York Times* speculates:

"Down in the dark there must be eels 130 feet long, and not all stories of sea serpents are impossible."

New species of fish are being found constantly. Mr. Coates, the New York Zoological Park aquarist, points out that the recent surge of interest in tropical fish has prompted a wide search for new and different varieties. For a time, he declares, new species, never before seen by scientists, were

being brought in at the rate of two a week from the region of the Amazon in South America.

If new animals are being found, why can't there be new and unknown things in the oceans? Nobody had the faintest idea that a four-footed creature like the okapi existed, until one showed up in 1900. In the last century, a two-horned, hairy-eared rhino was captured accidentally at Chittgong, in India—squarely in the heart of a region where naturalists had been working for years without ever being aware that a creature like that ever existed.

One of the stoutest arguments against the presence of sea monsters comes in the form of a question: "Where is the *corpus delicti*?" If these things have been around so long, many must have died. Well, where are the carcasses, the skulls, the bones, the rotting flesh?"

There are answers.

For one thing, there is no evidence that these creatures would float. Strip a whale of its blubber, and the rest of it would sink like lead. Who can tell how many bones of sea serpents lie in the fathomless depths, from Greenland to Australia?

For another, mysterious things which no one has been able to pigeon-hole actually have been washed ashore. The vast majority of objects spewed up by the seas do turn out to be the remains of known marine denizens—but there are some which do not.

Just one instance was the large blob of boneless flesh found off the coast of Florida a number of years ago. It was about 20 feet long and 7 feet high, and specimens were sent to Yale University for examination.

Here, Professor Verill, after intensive study, admitted that he was completely baffled. The flesh did not have muscle, nerve or blood-vessel fiber—it was completely different from the flesh of any creature known to science.

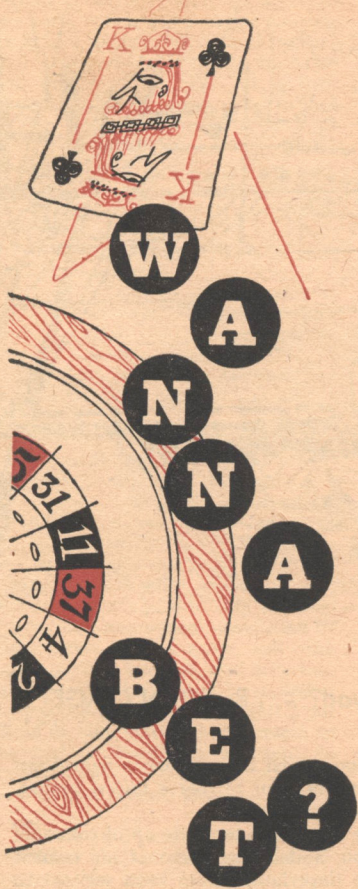
No sea monsters?

FROM all over the world reports have come in, reports by skippers and crewmen who have spent their lifetime on the seas, by fishermen to whom the ocean is home, by seaside dwellers, naval officers and other trained observers. Their statements are staggering in sheer volume alone.

Has everyone, in every country and in every generation, been wrong?

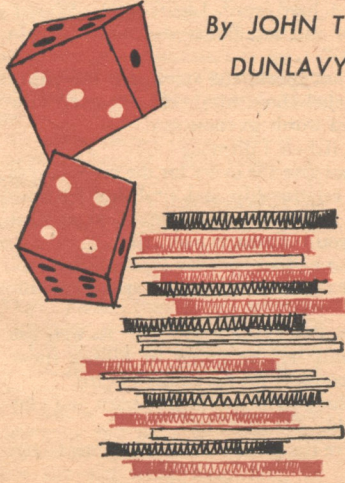
Well, there is one prehistoric fish being dissected at this present time in South Africa.

And there is every likelihood that there are other mammoth throwbacks to the age of monsters, which will reveal themselves from time to time to thunderstruck folks on or near the waters of the world. It should be interesting to see what happens. •



Facts and figures on games and gambling.

By JOHN T. DUNLAVY



Despite the fact that most gambling is illegal, experts call it one of America's largest industries, grossing over 20 billion dollars a year. The estimates break down as follows: Illegal bookmaking, 8 billion; numbers, policy and lotteries, 6 billion; slot machines, 3 billion; pari-mutuel bets, 1.6 billion; football and baseball pools, 1 billion; legal betting in the State of Nevada, 1 billion. About 1½ billion is sent out of the country annually for foreign lottery tickets.

The best chance a player has in honest gambling—except at craps—is on the roulette wheel at Monte Carlo, where the percentage for the house averages 1.35%. Poorest chance of all is the policy game where the house take is 40%, the numbers racket where it runs from 20% to 40%, and slot machines where the take is from 15% to 28%. Most slot machines can be manipulated by the operator to lower or increase the take.

Despite legend, the Bank at Monte Carlo has never been broken. Individual games and tables have run out of money but the Casino itself has always had plenty of funds.

Betting on the horses is by far the biggest single gambling operation in this country. Twenty-seven States permit racing and betting within the enclosure of the track. There are about 88 tracks, of which 20 are considered major. Meets and seasons are staggered so there are 5 or 6 major tracks running at any given time. Some 25 million people go to the races each year, 2 million of whom are considered steady patrons. The 15% racetrack deducts from the money bet on a pari-mutuel machine is generally split 8% for the State and 7% for the track. A sizable sum is also realized on "breakage"—that is, the track does not pay off the odd pennies of individual winnings but to the lower nickel or dime, which amounts to about 1 million dollars a year at every major New York track.

The pari-mutuel system of betting originated in France in the 1860's and was authorized by Kentucky a few years later, although not put into operation until 1908. Lotteries date back to Augustus and Nero who used them to finance building projects. Lotteries were conducted by Americans to finance the Revolutionary War and many tickets were purchased by George Washington. During the 18th Century, Harvard University raised 5 million dollars through lotteries.

From the early 1800's to 1917 the most popular gambling game in America was faro. Today it is craps. One reason for its popularity is its speed. In most games there is a roll every 60 seconds. In a fast game there may be a roll every twenty seconds. Card-and-dice expert John Scarne estimated that you have a 49.293 chance of winning in an honest dice game.

The all-time record of a pari-mutuel win occurred in Latonia, Kentucky, in 1912, when Wishing Well paid \$1885.50 for a \$2 ticket. However, since 1900 only 14 pari-mutuel winners in this country have won more than \$500 for \$2. The daily double record was set in 1939 at Washington Park, Illinois, when a \$2 bet paid off \$10,772.40—a world record. Lowest daily-double payoff totaled \$4.50 for \$2 in Canada in 1930.

Legalized gambling pays about one-fifth of the total State budget in Nevada. There is a table tax on each game or device and an overall 2% tax "off the top" on income of gambling houses. The 15 largest gambling-houses in that State yield 80% of the total gambling-tax revenue. About 10 million people are attracted to Nevada annually for gambling purposes.

When a coin is flipped ten times and comes up heads each time, would you bet for or against heads on the 11th throw? Ely Culbertson, in "What Are the Odds?" says the odds on the 11th throw if you are betting on individual tosses is exactly the same as on the first—that is, even money.

The Irish Sweepstakes receives over 50% of its funds from tickets sold in the U. S. The chance of winning a first prize in the Irish Sweeps is estimated at 400,000 to 1 against you. Mexico has a national lottery in which there are a total of 135 drawings a year with the odds only 10 to 1 against winning some prize. In Sweden the state lottery supports theaters.

The odds against getting 13 cards of a suit in bridge on the deal are 158,753,900 to 1. The odds are 13,629 against drawing a perfect hand in gin rummy. In draw poker the chances of improving your hand in any situation are estimated to be about 12 to 1 against you. "The Complete Poker Player" by Blackridge gives the following odds against a person drawing these cards in a poker game on the initial deal: straight flush, 64,999 to 1; four of a kind, 4,164 to 1; full house, 693 to 1; flush, 507 to 1; straight, 254 to 1; three of a kind, 45 to 1; two pair, 20 to 1; one pair, 13 to 10.

One of the oddest of the many strange superstitions which are connected with gambling is the one that if a man dies while playing the wheel at roulette the wheel will immediately begin favoring the players rather than the house. The total number of poker hands possible in a normal deck are 2,600,000. Most punch boards are designed to take in about 20 times the value of the prize offered. Nevada is the only State in the Union in which off-track betting is permitted. A nation-wide survey disclosed that one out of every 250 employees of industry is also employed part-time as an in-plant agent for bookies.



A BLUEBOOK SHORT SHORT COMPLETE ON THESE 2 PAGES.

# The Solution

What do you do when the woman you love is standing against the wall and you have to give the order to the firing squad? . . . By JOHN CLAGET

"PILOT-LIEUTENANT MAXIM ILLEV," he said, saluting. "Reporting as ordered, Colonel Petrovna."

"Very good." The stocky, bullet-headed group commander returned the salute. "Lieutenant Illev, Order of the Red Star, just returned from action in Korea. Right?"

"Yes, sir," replied Illev.

Colonel Petrovna glanced at Prokofitch, the secret-police officer attached to the group—a tall man with ice-blue eyes, thin mouth and smooth straw-blond hair.

Prokofitch nodded without speaking.

"Lieutenant Illev," said the colonel, "you know of the treachery that has blackened this group's name. Three officers have landed their jet fighters across the border in West Germany! The Soviet Union is dishonored, we are disgraced and the Yankee warmongers will have our planes to copy!" The good-humored lines in his face were now grooves of implacability.

"They must not escape!" said Illev, muffling his personal fear and growing dismay behind a screen of anger. "No punishment is too great for such traitors to our glorious cause. Can they not be reached?"

"Yes," said the colonel softly. "We will reach them. Their families are now being collected. In three days, comrades of this group will shoot them, here. It is the order of the State that this treachery shall be so punished!"

Cold horror froze Illev at hearing the sentence, though it was not unexpected. Sonia. Sonia Polenka. He had loved her always, it seemed; he had courted her, won her, then lost her to the gay Polenka, but still he loved her. He remembered her slim beauty, her great eyes, her dark hair.

"B-but—" stammered Illev, trying to fight down the rage that made him want to roar a useless protest. "What has this to do with me?"

"The firing squad will be made up of comrades of this group. You, a decorated hero of air combat against the Yankee imperialists, have been selected to command it."

"No!" Illev heard himself shout. "I won't do it. This is too much! I cannot do it! I would gladly execute Polenka for his crime—but not his wife and boy!"

There was sympathy on the colonel's face. He started to speak but Prokofitch shut him up.

"Cannot? A hard word, Lieutenant! 'Won't?' Let's see, Illev—your mother, father and sister live in Moscow, do they not?"

Illev could not speak; the room and the police officer's hard face reeled about him. He recovered himself, mumbled, forced words to come out.

"You mean, if I—if I do not—"

"If you do not give the order for the execution of these criminals—by relationship and probably by instigation—your family will face a firing squad at another time! And so will you. Think it over, Illev."

Illev fell into a chair, put his face in his hands. He was sick and shaken. The colonel spoke to him, almost kindly.

"Come, Illev, don't take it so hard. As well you as another. You will not be guilty of killing them. Polenka alone is responsible for his family's death."

Illev was a hard man—conceived, born and educated in a hard world. He stood up.

"So! If I give the order for the volley, my family is safe?"



Illustration by ANTHONY

"Without a doubt," said Prokofitch, almost smiling now. "Word of the Commissar himself. Not only will they be safe, but they'll be given special ration cards allowing them the use of Class B shops. Think how fine that will be! Eh? Good—it will be in three days."

Slow, black days of misery followed for Illev. He was not allowed to fly and every step was followed and watched. Illev cursed the God he had been trained to ignore that he had not been killed in Korea.

Time would not completely stop—and the morning came when Illev walked into the sunlight before a blank factory wall, a cigarette in his shaking fingers, not feeling the vodka within him. He looked at his world.

The group was in a hollow square facing the brick wall. Twelve men with submachine guns were in the center. A dozen men, women and children stood against the wall twenty feet away, with only their ankles bound to short stakes. Illev was at one side of the firing squad, the colonel and Prokofitch at the other. Hundreds of men made only the sound of breathing. A child cried among the victims and at last Illev looked at them.

The first thing he saw was Sonia's white, convulsed face. Little Nikolay was in her arms and it was his crying that was heard. Sonia hugged him closely to her drooping body. She looked tired, so tired, so hopeless. No escape for Sonia; no escape for Illev—they were both lost, all these people were lost, in a bottomless pit of horror and hopelessness; the natural state of those who let others take over their whole will, selling their souls to earthly devils.

"Proceed," said Colonel Petrovna.

"Load!" said Illev, not knowing his own voice. The sound of magazines being inserted, the rasp and

click of bolts being drawn back, seemed thunder-loud in the silence.

"Aim!" said Illev. He knew that after his next command there would be nothing, forever, on earth for him but the black load of guilt and horror he already felt. Looking at Sonia's sick fear, he thought of his family.

Then, suddenly, he knew what he had to do. He left his place and slowly, erectly, steadily walked toward Sonia Polenka. He heard the rising murmur behind him. He felt growing fear, but he felt also the rightness of his choice, and his guilt and horror were already gone.

He came up to Sonia, seeing her tired, hopeless face. Her arm was sagging with little Nikolay's weight. She was looking at Illev like one looking into hell, but slowly a light was born in her eyes.

"You're tired, dear," said Illev. "Let me take Nikolay."

He took the boy, still looking into her face. Sonia understood and her shoulders straightened. Illev held Nikolay close in his left arm, put his right arm around Sonia's slim waist, and looked into the face of the firing squad.

Petrovna and Prokofitch stood in dazed paralysis. Men murmured all around them. The muzzles of the guns—Illev recalled that the Yankees called them burp guns—were steady on the victims. The rising sun was warm and golden on Illev's face—a hard face that was softening now. He looked once more at Sonia, then back at the firing squad—and the unquenchable spirit of humanity looked out of his eyes.

"Fire!" said Lieutenant Maxim Illev.



A Man

**T**HE SUN WAS ALREADY CLIMBING as the second section of the train inched slowly along the siding, and the man they called Spike Murphy drew back into the shadow between the cars, and lowered his eyes.

At last he looked up. They were there, as he had known they would be—the townspeople, in groups all along the track. The doorway caught them, one by one: Ed Marshall, from the feed store, and Doc Reeves, and Drusy Parker, and the gaunt woman who used to wear a blue wrapper to water the geraniums on South Jefferson Street. It amazed him how many he recognized. And everywhere, shifting, darting, racing from car to car, were hundreds of wide-eyed youngsters.

He looked down again quickly, and when the train made its final shudder and stopped, he pulled the shapeless felt hat with its curiously defiant red feather down over his eyes and slipped quietly off on the far side. He followed the cardboard arrows that pointed down a cinder-packed lane leading away from the depot, away from

the town. Ten years, he thought, and heaven knew how many loads of cinders, and still the road drained into the same slanting gully, just to the left of the crown.

He still walked looking downward, seeing no higher than the grass verge, until the lane turned into a broad gateway. Something at the back of his mind was saying, "Not here. Surely not here. Not *this* field!" although he had known all along that it would be—had known it, but would not quite believe it.

The cookhouse was up, and the food-tent, steaming with breakfast smells; but there was a strange churning in his stomach, and he could not eat. He sat apart, drinking his coffee, not speaking to anyone.

He was a powerful man, with a huge muscled torso; he was twenty-nine, but looked older. He thought older, too, as a man who has entered his last rut, the job that will see his days out.

Finally he stood up, pushed aside his coffee-mug and walked out onto the field—a field that

# Called SPIKE

Freedom to roam, to live, to enjoy himself—  
that was the circus, and no one ever  
would take it from him. But someone did,  
and Spike knew it was for the best.

By MARY SELLARS

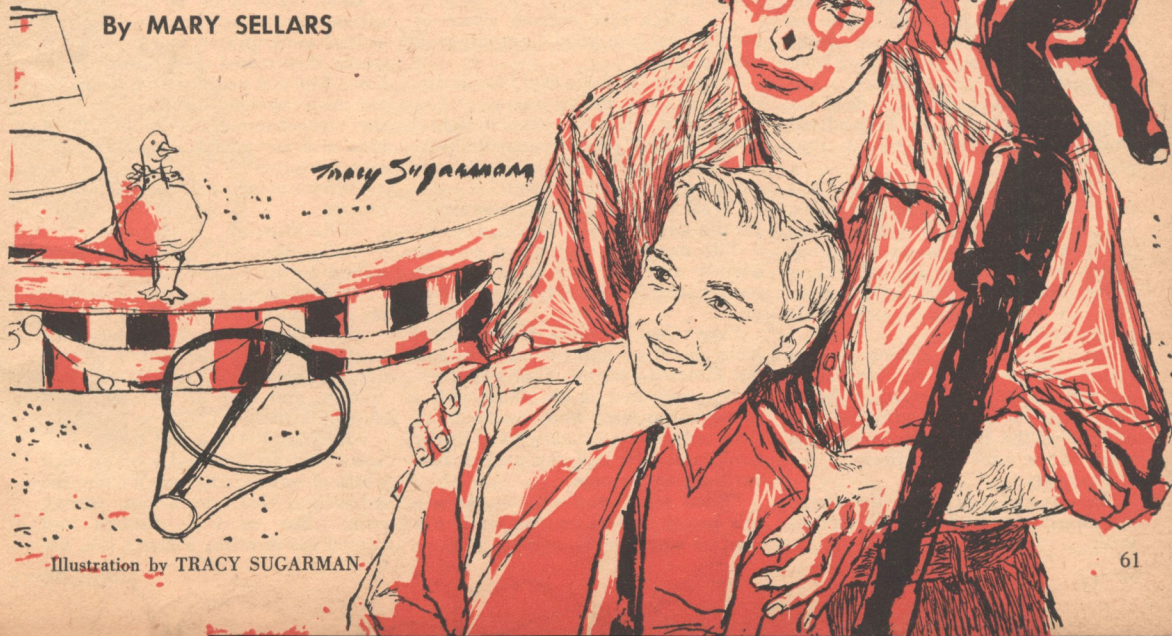


Illustration by TRACY SUGARMAN

was gradually turning into a miniature city, the Carterville Recreation Ground, the "Old Rec." But the man they called Spike Murphy saw nothing of the familiar menagerie cages, the bulldozers, the water-carts and the mountain of baled hay.

He needed a little time before people came down from the depot.

His foot scuffed something rough and hard. Home plate. He lifted his eyes at last, threw back his shoulders and stood breathing deeply. Now nothing of the circus was there, but ghosts came up quietly on all the bases. And he wasn't Spike Murphy any more, he was Johnny Gates: lean, swift, free Johnny Gates, getting ready to smack the ball and run like a colt around the diamond.

**T**HE Old Rec. All the youth of Johnny Gates was here; only the seasons changed. All the days when freedom was something that sang through your hair, blew sharp and cold into your nostrils, chuckled in your tireless muscles.

The bases seemed to empty; different ghosts appeared. Now it was the Ice Cream Fête given by Tonsen's Dairy, here on this same spot. Grape ice cream they were pushing that year, he remembered, round gobs of a queer chemical purple. He was talking to Ellen—trying to talk to her, that is. Actually, he was lost, half-mesmerized by her pale silken hair, her baby-clean skin, the unbelievable freshness of her chambray dress. And that had been his undoing.

Yet, even while they were engaged he had begun to chafe a little as Ellen started the age-old process of house-breaking him. Rubbers off at the door, straighten the tie, all that. And the appalling daintiness of the meals she served him—steak, but on an eggshell plate on a lace cloth; glass dessert dishes that terrified him. He wasn't used to it and it irked him. His mother had been dead for four years and he and his father lived alone and did pretty much as they pleased.

There were other things, too. His job in the office at the Star Laundry, and the overbearing Mrs. Risley who ran it—a stout, enormous woman, not a bad sort, really, but with something in her voice that never yielded; that, even on the telephone, could ride people down.

Yes, things were closing in on Johnny Gates that year. His father married again, and even at home there was no more reading at the table, and the lace tidies were back again on the arms of the chairs.

Ten years.

He was eighteen when the circus last played a one-night stand in Carterville.

He had gone down alone at six, to watch the first section come in. Ellen said she would come down later. But she had not arrived by the time the second section was in, and the elephants had lumbered heavily out of the stock-cars, so he had wandered down to the circus-ground to see what was going on. Even as now, the menagerie cages were set out around the edges, the giraffe was delicately nuzzling her twig-like baby, and he would probably have been fascinated by them, if he had not seen something else first.

Over where they had pegged out the site of the Big Top, a man was wielding a sledgehammer, driving stakes into the ground. He was stripped to the waist, sunburned to a deep coppery brown, and the huge muscles of his shoulders and arms rippled like those of some giant panther. He was youngish, not more than thirty; he wore an earth-colored felt hat without any band, and beneath it his eyes were sloe-black and lazily humorous.

But it was not merely the size of his muscles that held Johnny Gates spellbound. It was the ease, the perfect rhythm with which he swung the huge sledge, not a bead of sweat on his brow—as if, indeed, it were a stage-property, a papier-mâché hammer, and he were effortlessly taking part in some ballet.

That, Johnny had thought, was the secret of the world; and he envied the man beyond reason. If you were as strong as that in the body, you could never be enslaved in your mind. No one could touch you. You were calm, because you were strong; you were happy, because you were strong. You were free—you could walk the earth like a giant.

The black eyes became aware of his bemused gaze, good-naturedly took stock of him.

"Practice," said the man laconically, never pausing in his swing. "You could do it, after five years straight."

"Me!" said Johnny incredulously.

"Sure. You don't think I was born swinging this thing, do you?"

"Well, no." Then, "You married?" He did not know why he asked it.

The mouth curved down ever so slightly and the man expertly shot out a streak of tobacco juice. "Not me."

Even then, Johnny Gates might have passed on and forgotten it, had not Howard Hanson, Ellen's brother-in-law, appeared at his elbow with a message—Howard, who was no more than twenty-seven, who worked in the bank, and who had run a mere fifty yards across the field.

"Ellen said"—*puff*—"she"—*wheeze*—His breath rasped on the air like a saw; he could hardly speak.

Johnny looked at him with horror. That's how it is, he thought. They get you cooped up behind a teller's cage, in an office, or behind a counter, and you lose that wonderful strength, that beautiful swiftness. And then it's all over, they can do what they like with you; you're stuck, caught, overthrown.

And yet, thought the man they now called Spike Murphy, it was queer—it isn't the big things that finally push you over the edge. Because he hadn't even protested, three months later, when Ellen told him they would have to get married, now, *at once*; told him trustingly without whimpering or reproaching.

He'd gone through with it without a murmur, even finding contentment in the nearness of Ellen; perhaps because the very fact of her yielding had given him confidence, a sign of her vulnerability.

Until the day she said they should choose a pattern for their china; she explained to him how they could buy just a few pieces now, and gradually add to them, year by year.

That had done it; that had seemed to him so awful that he almost walked out of the house then and there. He saw his whole future mortgaged, committed to buying this china, saw the pattern, endlessly repeated, surrounding him, following him down the years. Curiously, only then did it finally dawn on him that he, Johnny Gates, barely nineteen, eager, wanting the whole world—Johnny Gates, in whom the sap was still rising—Johnny Gates was a husband, a father-to-be, caught, caged, to be held until the sap eventually ebbed, and left him defeated, manageable.

**O**NE week later he pulled out, without fanfare or even good-by—just walked away quietly, and covered his tracks, then traced the circus to Oklahoma City and hitchhiked down there. He made straight for the man with the sledgehammer, who recognized him, and accepted his presence with casual unconcern.

"What's your name?" asked Johnny eagerly.

"Mike Murphy. What's yours?"

"Spike Murphy." The words had spilled out quickly, without thought.

"So that's how it is. O.K., so you're my kid brother."

And that was how it had been, for five years, until Mike walked off one day, just as amiably and indifferently as ever, and went to join the Merchant Marine.

And Johnny Gates had turned into Spike Murphy the hard way, through weeks of sore, aching muscles, and the exhaustion that was a hot, tearing pain. But he won through and reaped his rewards; a man's life, un-



trammled, rough and uncaring. He steered clear of womenfolk of the circus, even of the family men, of all possible ties and all entanglements; sticking, instead, to the unattached, free spirits like Mike, and Billy Fundy, one of the clowns.

But when they stopped over for a few days at one place, there would be plenty of admiring eyes watching him covertly as he worked—stripped, magnificent, the muscles rippling molten steel under the bronze skin. There would usually be a girl waiting for him in the shadows as he came off duty—not just easy girls, either.

AND Spike Murphy would step out proudly, arrogantly, like a rooster, with his high, bulging chest and slim hips, the red feather in his slouch hat. That was his life; a life that trickled easily through a man's fingers, leaving no memories, no souvenirs.

"Spike! Spike Murphy!"

Someone was calling his name, and he brought himself back to the present with a jerk. He'd have to be getting to work. He pulled out his big hammer from the box already open on the grass; his hammer now, through long custom.

He saw that the spectators were beginning to trickle down from the railroad, and he moved behind a truck of folded seats to observe them for a minute. He recognized a few more—Paul Mattson, the pharmacist at Walgreen's, wearing glasses now; that trim Mrs. Gibson, apparently a grandmother already, pushing a blue-and-cream kiddy car. And that—could that possibly be Mrs. Risley, that once-florid, "stylish-stout"? He saw that she must have had some sort of stroke; she walked rigidly, slowly, leaning heavily on the arm of her husband. There they all were—his people, in a sense, and yet so exactly like every other crowd at every other small town the circus had visited, that he felt no kinship, only a kind of dull pity.

And he wondered if it would be the same when he saw Ellen—and the child. He did not even know whether it was a boy or a girl. He hoped it was a son, though why there should have been any hope about it, he did not know either.

He laid down the hammer, and going over to the dressing-rooms, sought his friend Billy Fundy, the clown.

"I want to borrow some of your makeup," he said abruptly. "I got creditors here."

"Yeah?" Billy Fundy winked slyly.

"Yeah. Tell you about it sometime. Not now."

"It's your face!" Billy shrugged.

Quickly he swabbed on the clown-white, painted a dolorous scarlet mouth that extended from ear to ear;

added red-and-blue target circles around the eyes, a blue diamond on the nose; crowned him with a straggling circle of straw hair and a battered top hat.

"Your own mother-in-law wouldn't know you," said Billy Fundy with a final wink.

Do I know myself? wondered the man they called Spike Murphy, going back to his task amid the curious glances of his fellow-workers and the delighted stares of the children. But no one asked for reasons from Spike Murphy. So he went his way, ignoring them, occasionally stumbling to amuse the children, pretending to miss the stake altogether, to threaten them with the hammer—but always watching, wondering.

And then he saw them. He recognized Ellen immediately; she wasn't very much changed, really. Not a girl any more, of course—stiffer, with a prim, self-contained quality. Then his eye dropped quickly to the boy who walked beside her, holding her hand. There was no mistaking that pale silken stubble, the curve of the neck, the flattish line of the cheekbone. Ellen's child, he thought, every inch of him. Two strangers.

Only, just at that moment, the boy jerked his head round, eagerly staring, and the man they called Spike Murphy found himself looking straight into his own eyes, the long, hazel eyes of Johnny Gates.

It was a queer sensation, more than he could cope with at that moment. He swung away swiftly, feeling suddenly naked, afraid Ellen would turn too and see right through the chalky mask, by the very duplication of those eyes.

But he watched as they moved over to see the animals, noticing the almost inhuman cleanness of the boy, pitying him, resenting it. The cotton shirt and trousers were immaculately clean and ironed, the pale hair implacably parted and slicked down.

"For a kid at the circus!" thought Johnny Gates angrily. "Hell, he's shined up enough for Sunday school."

They were over by the hippopotamus cage, where the water in the swimming-tank had not been changed yet, and the stench was pretty rank.

"Phew!" said the boy, and his mother gave a little tug to his hand, as if disapproving.

It weighed on the spirits of the man who watched them, in irritation and disgust. Plenty of youngsters that age were running wild all over the field, but Ellen kept the boy close by her side. They didn't even stay long. But he felt a little better as he heard Ellen say:

"You'll see it all again when we come to the matinee." At least the kid was going to see the show.

When three o'clock arrived, he saw them come in with the crowd, and noted that they climbed high into the top section of the tent, in the cheaper seats. He wished he could have done something about that. He would gladly have made up the difference for them to have a ringside seat, but there was no way he could arrange it without focusing a lot of attention on himself, and arousing unwanted curiosity.

When it was over, he missed them completely. It was almost five and he had had to give a hand to packing up the cookhouse equipment, so that it could be loaded onto the first section. It was only when the last starry-eyed youngsters had straggled out of the gate, to go home and moon happily over their suppers, that he realized it was all over. He felt suddenly deflated.

"That's all," he told himself. But it seemed like an anticlimax. "For God's sake, what did you expect?" he asked himself moodily. "You didn't even want to come at all, in the first place."

But one part of him refused to believe that this was all. He was hardly conscious of it as a definite feeling, and still some part of him was waiting; the day wasn't over yet. He knew it only, at last, because he had not removed his makeup, and he laughed at himself as he realized it. But he still would not take it off; the day wasn't over yet.

JUST before the evening performance the boy came back alone, when the last of the food-tent had been stowed away and the menagerie wagons were boarded up and trundling down to the railroad. He looked about him, puzzled.

"Lose something, son?" asked the man they called Spike Murphy.

The boy smiled shyly.

"No, sir. Not exactly. I was looking for the rhinoceros and the giraffes."

"Oh, they've gone already. All this has to be packed up and rolling by midnight, so we have to start early."

The boy nodded, wonderingly though, as if he could not imagine how all this vast conglomeration of glittering equipment, people, elephants, horses, could possibly be packed up again into four neat trainloads.

"What's your name, sonny? Didn't I see you this morning?"

"Yes, sir. John Gates, Junior."

"Which do they call you at home—Johnny or Junior?"

"Both, sometimes."

"Well, I guess I'll call you Junior. Are you going in to the show?"

"No, sir. We saw it this afternoon, my mother and me."

Lord, thought the man, how polite he is, how careful, and how indecently clean! Ellen had put him into another clean shirt for the evening and the part in his hair was again fiercely accurate.

"How'd you like to walk around with me, Junior, and see some of the ring animals, the performing ones?"

The boy nodded eagerly, his eyes shining.

"Would you mind telling me when it's half-past eight, please? That's when my mother comes off duty, and I have to go then."

"I see. Sure, I'll tell you. What does your mother do?"

"She's the head waitress at Burgess' Restaurant. They gave her the afternoon off so we could come to the circus."

"That so? They must think a whole lot of her." The man hesitated a moment, wondering if he dare probe any further. "And what does your father do, Junior?" he asked casually as if making conversation.

Instantly the boy's face withdrew a little.

"I haven't any father," he said guardedly, quickly.

"Oh. That's tough, sonny. You mean he"—the man groped awkwardly for a child's phrase—"went to heaven?"

The boy shook his head.

"He just went away. My mother says he probably lost his memory. It was a long time ago; I don't even remember. But I did have one," he added earnestly, as if it had at some time been questioned.

"Sure you did, kid. Come on, let's go."

So that was how Ellen had saved her face: amnesia. No, he thought, be fair—it was for the boy's sake. It isn't easy for a boy to live with the nagging question—why did his father leave him? What sort of man would do that to him?

It wasn't a question he could answer just at the moment. He led the way quickly behind the scenes, explaining busily to Junior all the intricacies of packing and unpacking a gigantic circus.

The boy stayed close beside him, obedient, polite, obviously entranced. But the man was increasingly aware of his docility, of how carefully he tried to avoid getting dirty, how worriedly he tried to wipe off his hands on the grass when he soiled them on a piece of dirty hemp. Once, he made some reference to "my grandma, who lives with us—" and anger exploded inside the man like a red ball of sparks.

It was a kind of angry pity, and a despair at the folly of things. It was all too easy to imagine the boy's life in a manless household, where two anx-

ious, well-meaning women tried to apologize to the world for the disgrace of a runaway husband by a life of fanatical cleanliness and grinding blamelessness.

He took the boy everywhere, with a fierce determination that for this one night, at least, he should enjoy himself. He took a wry pleasure in encouraging him to get dirty, mused, and convincing him it did not matter. He showed him everything at close quarters; the elephants, the dancing bears and tigers, the exuberant seals, and the tiny cream-colored ponies with their red-and-gilt trappings. The boy watched the glittering floats line up for a grand march, and rode for one glorious moment on Prince Talisman, the magnificent Arab stallion, in his jeweled harness and towering plumes.

They stood beside the performers' entrance and saw how the women, in spangled gauze and tights, handed over their babies to attendants before whirling into the ring to do their acts; emerged three minutes later and just as nonchalantly picked up the babies again. A small boy in overalls tore bare-foot across the grass toward the door.

"Hey, Pop!" he yelled to a man in a spangled leotard.

Junior stared at him, wide-eyed, disbelieving.

"Does he live here?" he whispered. "Sure. His father's a high-wire man."

"Gosh!"

It was hardly more than a breath, but what was in the eyes of the boy was not new to the man who watched him.

He saw the boy drink in the scene around him, saw his very nose quiver at the strong exciting smells—the jungle smells, the male smells of the animals, the sawdust, the dung, and the rope-and-timber smell of the Big Top. It was Johnny Gates' boy who was looking out of those eyes and thinking, "This is a good life; a boy could be happy here. A man's life."

Yes, thought the man, still watching; he's felt it, too, the pressure, the chafing, the closing in, just as Johnny Gates felt it ten years ago. And with more reason.

Then the light died out of the boy's eyes; he sighed. And the man knew, just as surely, that he was thinking: "But, of course, I couldn't. When I grow up I have to be the man of the family. I have to stay."

It wasn't until then that Spike Murphy admitted to himself the idea that had been growing in him, though he knew now it had been turning steadily all this time, quietly ticking like a forgotten turntable in a darkened room.

Suppose he were to take his boy away. Set him out of this woman-

ridden atmosphere before it was too late, before Johnny Gates' boy with the restless, worried eyes went down with all the Howards of the world, caged, ignominious. Because, when the time came, he would not have his father's consciousness of strength and swiftness, to save him; that was being taken care of already.

He could do it. Now, while the spell was still on the boy, he could work on him still more, show him more wonders, tempt him with stories of his life, his freedom, his travels. Yes, it wouldn't be too hard. The lion-tamer was coming out of the ring now, ushering the big cats back into their cages, easily, matterfully. And the light was back in the boy's eyes again, the enchantment, the dream.

He hoisted the boy onto a shoulder and kept going, showing him the feverish packing of the stage properties by the prop-men, as soon as they left the performers' hands, the ceaseless chugging and hauling of the bulldozers, the endless procession down to the tracks. And over the whole, like an obbligato of delight, were the squeals and gasps from the audience, the gorgeous blare of the band, as the big show went on.

He could smuggle the boy into his own bunk on the train, the man was still thinking; they would wake up tomorrow in another State—for the boy, another world. They would start a new life together, a team, father and son; freedom for Johnny Gates, Junior, the same chance his father had had ten years ago.

It was then that he had his first doubt, and he could not honestly say at that moment whether it was for the boy's sake or his own that he hesitated. What, he thought, is this life I am offering? Do I, in truth, want my life to be complicated, at last? Those were the two questions. Which was the real reason why he was hesitating?

And then he heard it—the tune. The band had jerked swiftly into "The Red, White and Blue"—the danger signal, the tune that meant crisis, catastrophe, disaster! The tune he had heard only once before in all the ten years.

It might mean fire, or injury, or an animal gone berserk. But whatever it was, the greater danger was of panic, the blind smell of fear that could stampede the animals, that could set human beings to fighting, trampling each other to death in their hysteria.

For one instant every worker on the grounds froze as he himself froze, like the sudden stoppage of a movie projector. Then they leaped into action.

Spud Meyer, the animal man, dashed over to the elephants, already decorated with frills and parasols for their balancing act.

"Tails!" he yelled.

Unquestioningly, the huge beasts turned into a column, linked tails and trunks, as Spud headed them for the gate.

And in that split second the decision of Johnny Gates was made; made not by him, but for him—not made by any person, finally, but by a reflex as simple and automatic as when an arm shoots up to ward off a blow—or to catch a ball. Just so swiftly and automatically moved the hands of Johnny Gates as he seized the boy by the collar and seat, shot him up by one powerful arm, straight onto the neck of the nearest elephant.

"Listen, Junior," he shouted urgently. "When you get to the railroad, the man will get you down. And you go *straight home!* I have to stay here; there's been an accident. They'll be needing me. Do you understand?"

The boy's face was a small white wedge, high above him.

"Y—yes," he said uncertainly.

"Hold on; you'll be all right. Don't try to come back here, or you'll get hurt. Go *straight home!* Good-by, kid."

Then he was gone, as the elephant lumbered away into the darkness. And Spike Murphy was plunging back into the chaos, to see what he must do.

He found out what was happening. Four rows of seats in a lower tier had collapsed; the surrounding benches had panicked, fearing they would be next. In the crash and commotion, tremors ran through the rigging, tugging at a row of lights; they flickered and went out. A terrified woman shrieked, "The whole tent's coming down!"

It was his own section, he noted, in the instant before he plunged into the intricate scaffolding, the maze of timber, metal, rope, of which he knew every joint, every bolt, every tension. He saw at once what could be done, if only it could be done in time—if, up above, the tent could be cleared without utter pandemonium.

For twenty minutes, then, he held in place a leaning, sagging timber, forced it by the strength of his muscles to take its place in the complex structure, so that no further damage need take place.

Meanwhile, above and around him, the band continued to play, ambulances screamed, men worked feverishly to get the animals to safety. The ring was filled with gallant, desperate gaiety as the performers went into their acts, sang, clapped, cheered—anything to produce order and reason in the frightened mob. Roberto and Zorina ran nimbly, coolly, into the

rigging, to prove that the tent was not coming down; they spun madly overhead on their golden ladder.

It was not, in the end, a major catastrophe. Fifteen people were injured, but only four seriously. After the first screaming terror the audience behaved pretty well. Some women fainted, and children cried, but the sight of Roberto and Zorina shamed them into order. It was not a heroic showing, but the tent was cleared without catastrophe. . . .

In the dead calm of utter exhaustion, Johnny Gates lay on his back in the Old Rec and stared up at the stars. The work crew was dismantling the Big Top without him. He knew every sound, every movement, by heart. Every day, thought Johnny Gates, or every three days, or four days, what does it matter, we unpack the pieces of this fabulous toy, this gigantic Chinese puzzle. Then we pack them all up again:

What does it add up to? Well, there are different sorts of cages, maybe. And the Mrs. Risleys of the world grow old even as we grow older, only we are too impatient to believe it.

He could hear the grass-roots tearing as Joey, Buff and Beryl, the three work-elephants, brought back from the railroad, pulled up the stakes. He squinted at them between his lashes, and he knew that whenever he looked at them he would see the boy perched up there, on an elephant's neck, riding away, lonely and uncertain.

He knew now what he must do for him.

A boy without a father is licked from the start, he thought, but a boy with a father to stand up for him is a whole boy, free and confident. It was very simple. He was going to stay and fight, for John Gates, Junior.

He refused to think of the days when the old restlessness would bite him, when he would bitterly resent his decision. So I lost my memory, thought Johnny Gates, and now I have found it. The boy who ran away to join the circus is back again, because he has a man's job to do.

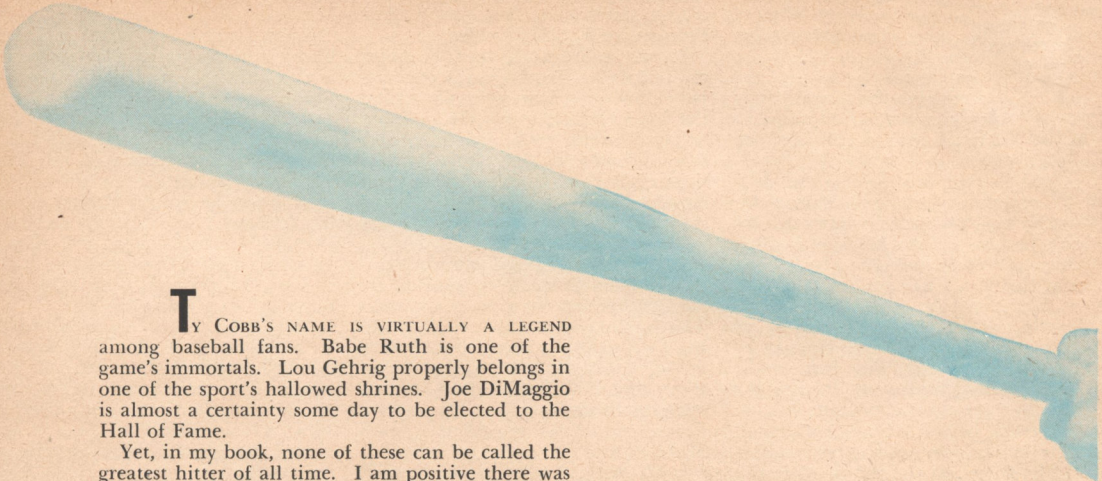
Maybe, he thought, it wouldn't be such a fight after all. The balance would be righted; the balance he had upset. For the first time in ten years he thought of it from Ellen's point of view. He thought of the girl who had named his son for him, in spite of everything.

He rolled over, with his face pressed to the grass, and thought of Ellen for a long time. I could be wrong, he thought; I could be wrong about a lot of things.

When the last section of the circus train pulled out, two hours late, the man they called Spike Murphy was not on it. Johnny Gates, without the make-up, wearing a shirt and his one good suit, watched it sway and wink its red light into the darkness. Then he picked up his cheap suitcase and started down the street, toward the town.



"Stop acting as if you've never seen anyone in a low-cut neckline, Ward . . . WARD!"



**T**Y COBB'S NAME IS VIRTUALLY A LEGEND among baseball fans. Babe Ruth is one of the game's immortals. Lou Gehrig properly belongs in one of the sport's hallowed shrines. Joe DiMaggio is almost a certainty some day to be elected to the Hall of Fame.

Yet, in my book, none of these can be called the greatest hitter of all time. I am positive there was at least one batter who was their superior. And I can prove it.

Take the fundamental object of the game of baseball, for example. The essential purpose of the game is to score more runs than the opposition, a point with which no one can argue. And runs are

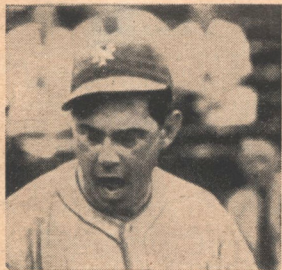
# the **greatest** hitter of

**His name may surprise you, and his choice is bound to start arguments wherever baseball men meet. But there can be no arguing with the facts, and Specs Toporcer has all the facts.**

**By GEORGE "SPECS" TOPORCER**



# all time



All the great sluggers pictured on these two pages had to be considered by Specs Toporcer when he selected the one man who topped them all. Shown are: *top*, Joe DiMaggio, Bill Terry and Lou Gehrig; *bottom*, Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, Tris Speaker, Rogers Hornsby and the great, dynamic Stan (The Man) Musial.

scored mainly through hitting, particularly long-distance hitting. Before you can name any *one* player as the greatest hitter the game has produced, therefore, you have to give special attention to the long-distance clouter.

Now, I have no intention of trying to change the present system of rating batters according to their percentages, inadequate though this system may be. But few, even among the most discerning fans, will dispute the logic of giving the player who hits for a *much greater total base figure*—while also driving in more runs—the credit he earns and deserves.

Bear in mind that batting percentages can be swelled by speed afoot, rather than by sheer ability to bash the ball on the nose. Yet meeting the ball squarely, and propelling it for distance, is HITTING in its truest form, and this is where the player of my choice stands out far above any other.

I want to emphasize this business of slugging versus percentage a bit further.

To illustrate how misleading a batting percentage may be, let's just scan last season's averages in the major leagues. In the National League there is no argument. Stan Musial stands head and shoulders above any other player, as he has for many years. He was top man on both counts, leading in percentage *as well as* in total bases. Combined, these accomplishments make him the best hitter in the game today.

The story is a bit different in the American League. Here the fallacy of rating hitters only on their batting percentage really stands out. Ferris Fain, then of the Philadelphia Athletics, led the junior loop in 1952 with an average of .327. A good hitter, yes, but was he the best? Not in my book.

Nobody can convince me Fain was a better hitter than several other players in his league. Take Al Rosen and Larry Doby of the Cleveland Indians, and Yogi Berra of the New York

Yankees. Fain topped Rosen's .302 by 25 points, and out-hit Doby's .276 and Berra's .273 by a total of 51 and 54 points respectively.

Yet despite these differences I am sure I'd prefer having any one of the three hitting in my club, day in and day out all season, rather than Fain; and I'm sure this voices the sentiments of most American League managers. Why? Because Fain belted only 2 home runs and drove in only 59 runs—anemic figures compared to Rosen's 28 homers and 105 R.B.I.'s, Doby's 32 homers and 104 R.B.I.'s, and Berra's 30 homers and 98 R.B.I.'s.

It is a basic fact that consistent power hitters form the backbone of any team's attack. Without one or two long-distance clouters in the line-up, no team can hope to get very far in a pennant race. As a major-league player, and later as a manager for many years, I always had a keen awareness of the importance of having a couple of guys on my side who could powder the ball for distance, and drive in those runs. To which any thinking manager will say, amen!

The Hank Sauters, the Ralph Kiner, the Al Rosens and others of that type don't come along very often, so managers must be content to stud their line-ups with the more common hitter who lacks power—and these latter are valuable, of course. But you will note that fans soon forget the Harry Walkers (who led the National League in hitting one year, and is a brother of the more famous Dixie Walker) but they'll always remember the Hank Greenbergs, the Ted Williams, and the Lou Gehrigs.

Power, therefore, is virtually the prime essential for a great hitter, and it is among the power hitters that we must look for the one player who stands out above all others. Ty Cobb, although not a superpower hitter, certainly has to be given consideration. His many records as a runner and batter have never been topped, and his

lifetime batting percentage of .367 is the highest in the game's history, with a strong suspicion existing (at least in my mind) that it never will be surpassed. Yes, he had power, but how would you rate him with a Ruth or a Gehrig as a hitter who could drive in those runs? I repeat, that remains the first object of the game.

Who, then, were the really great hitters of all time? Certainly you could select perhaps a dozen men who properly should be considered tops, and from these pick the one man who stands out as the king; and, as a basis for argument, I've listed below the ten men I regard as the all-time greats with the stick. Alongside their names I've listed the clubs with which they were associated during the years of their greatest glory, as well as their lifetime batting averages. From this group we eventually can select the one man who tops them all.

Here's my list:

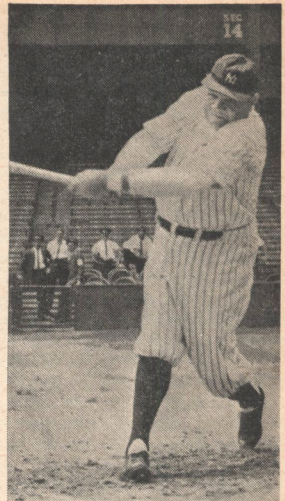
Ty Cobb, outfielder—Tigers . . . . .	.367
Rogers Hornsby, second baseman—Cardinals . . . . .	.358
Joe Jackson, outfielder—Indians—White Sox . . . . .	.356
Ted Williams, outfielder—Red Sox . . . . .	.347
Stan Musial, outfielder—Cardinals . . . . .	.346
Tris Speaker, outfielder—Indians . . . . .	.344
Babe Ruth, outfielder—Yankees . . . . .	.342
Harry Heilmann, outfielder—Tigers . . . . .	.342
Lou Gehrig, first-baseman—Yankees . . . . .	.340
George Sisler, first-baseman—Browns . . . . .	.340

Rating close behind this group are other great sluggers, such as Napoleon "Larry" Lajoie, a graceful Cleveland second-baseman of the early century; Al Simmons and Eddie Collins, of the Philadelphia Athletics; Honus Wagner and Paul Waner, of the Pittsburgh Pirates; Joe DiMaggio, of the New



Joe DiMaggio, of the New York Yankees, can't be ignored in any discussion of baseball's greatest hitter. But Specs Toporcer proves that Joe isn't the game's kingpin.

Babe Ruth? The Bambino? The Sultan of Swat? Who has ever topped him in the eyes of the fans? Yet one man did, as Specs Toporcer proves!



York Yankees; Bill Terry, of the New York Giants, and others. However, these men are so far removed from Cobb's .367 that there is no use troubling to make any comparisons between them and the immortal Ty.

It should be interesting to note that the above list contains seven outfielders, and only three infielders. There are no shortstops, third-basemen or catchers in the group. In fact, aside from Hornsby, the first eight all are outfielders!

The preponderance of outfielders in this select group is rather startling when we consider that they represent the minority in an every-day line-up. The ratio is 5 to 3 against them, with the catcher and the four infielders opposed to three outfielders. It does, however, reveal what most fans already know—that outfielders are selected for their batting rather than for their fielding skills.

But, by process of elimination, let's narrow the field to the man, or men, who might justly dispute Ty Cobb's right to be known as the greatest hitter.

Cobb, the Georgia Peach, out-hit Harry Heilmann and Lou Gehrig by 25 and 27 points respectively. The gaps are far too wide to consider either as a serious challenger. True, both of these latter stars were prolific sluggers, outshining Cobb in this phase of hitting. However, their proficiency in this department is not sufficient to overcome the tremendous advantage held by Cobb in batting percentages—which eliminates two of his nine competitors.

Tris Speaker, a marvelous all-around performer, whom many rank as the greatest defensive outfielder of all time, was also outdistanced by a margin of twenty-three points by the

former Detroit luminary. Since they approximated each other in slugging ability, the big difference in percentage speaks for itself. Speaker, fine batter though he was, is clearly and unmistakably outclassed by Cobb. Thus another rival falls from contention.

If one wished to theorize, a strong case could be made for the peerless George Sisler. "What!" you may say. "Sisler hit only .340, *even less than Gehrig*, and Lou was a better slugger than George. How come you rate Sisler so highly? It doesn't make sense."

No, I agree; on the basis of facts, George cannot be given any real consideration. But when we analyze George's career, we learn he was struck down by an unfortunate illness just when he was at his peak, after only seven-and-a-half years in the majors. He had just finished the 1922 season, and with a booming .420 average, and up to that time his lifetime average had been .365, only two points less than Cobb's all-time mark. In power, the two men were about equal. For two of the three years before he was stricken, Sisler exceeded the coveted .400 mark, so there is no telling to what heights he might have traveled with normal health and well-being.

**I**n fact, how Sisler managed to bat over 300 for so many seasons, with his handicaps, and following a year of enforced idleness in 1923, will always remain a source of wonder to those familiar with the circumstances. Without his illness, it is quite possible he might have gone on to exceed Cobb's highwater mark of .367. But, since such an assumption must be based entirely on conjecture, and not

on fact, I must dismiss Sisler's candidacy for top honors.

Ted Williams, of the Boston Red Sox, and Stan Musial, of the St. Louis Cardinals, are the only modern players among the top ten. Both are about neck-and-neck at the moment, Williams leading Musial by just one point, with a .347 lifetime average. Though they trail Cobb by about 20 points, many fans will vote for either, or both, as top man. Some experts recognize the fact that, unlike Cobb, they have had to operate under the handicap of a combination of night and day ball, and also did not have the advantage of playing in the days when the sacrifice fly rule was in effect. (Just in case you've forgotten, up to some twenty years ago a batter was not credited with a time at bat when a base runner advanced a base after the catch of any fly ball, either fair or foul. Conservative estimates indicate that when this rule was in vogue it added from five to ten points to a player's seasonal average.)

There is something to be said in support of those who believe that either Williams or Musial should be rated as the hitting king. They both have more power than Cobb had, and it is conceded they have been handicapped by batting under artificial lights, as well as by the elimination of the sacrifice fly rule. It might be interesting, therefore, to learn the views of one of the principals involved. In a conversation with Stan Musial, last summer, he told me it was his belief that night baseball, and the elimination of the sacrifice fly rule, cut possibly 20 points off his annual average.

Granting all this, there are other factors which help balance the scales. Both Ted and Stan compiled some of

their best percentages during the war and post-war years, when pitching was of considerably less than big-league caliber, thus enabling them to build up their present lifetime marks. They also hit exclusively at a lively ball during their careers, which was not the case with Cobb. Taking everything into consideration, I cannot, therefore, rate either Ted or Stan as being up to the Cobb standard, so they too are relegated to the also-rans. That leaves us with only three more aspirants for the crown.

One of the three remaining challengers is "Shoelless" Joe Jackson, the White Sox and Indian slugger, whom some old-timers rate as the best natural hitter of them all. Joe holds the distinction of being the only player, at least in this century, ever to bat .400 in his first major-league campaign. This was in 1911, when he batted .408.

Joe packed terrific power, but, because of the dead ball then in use, his home-run output fell far short of those of modern sluggers. Joe, a simple, guileless man, was expelled from

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Rich widows are the only second-hand goods that sell at first-class prices.

—Benjamin Franklin

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baseball following the investigation of the Chicago White Sox-Cincinnati Reds World Series of 1919. This was the scandal which shook the baseball world, and was responsible for bringing Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis into the game as its first commissioner. When, over a year later, the judge closed his investigation, Jackson and a half-dozen other White Sox players were blacklisted for throwing the series. Many are still around who insist Jackson was an innocent victim in the affair. The fact that he hit for a thumping average, and did not make an error in the series, seems to lend credence to this belief.

In any event, his career was ended abruptly following the 1920 season, in which he batted .382. Despite his advantage in power, Jackson's lifetime total is 11 points short of Cobb's, but this, plus his short career, must eliminate him from real consideration.

One of the two remaining figures is George Herman "Babe" Ruth, the renowned Sultan of Swat, and the greatest slugger of them all. His power made baseball history, so there is no need to dwell upon it here. Babe trailed Ty by a considerable margin in the batting percentages. The basic question involved is, does Ty's .367 batting average—25 points higher than

Babe's .342 mark—overcome Ruth's slugging power?

It's a weighty problem, and, up to now, Babe is the only player seriously to challenge Cobb's right as top man. However, the issue still rides in favor of Cobb. True, Babe leads by an overwhelming majority in home runs, the field in which he was supreme; but, on the other hand, Ty's superiority in doubles and triples is just as clear-cut, thus discounting a good deal of the power advantage held by Ruth. The big spread of 25 points in their batting averages is not counterbalanced by the Babe's home-run clouting. Cobb is still the champ.

We now emerge, though, with the player of my choice. Having been his understudy and teammate for six full years during his heyday, possibly I will be accused of being prejudiced in naming Rogers Hornsby as my choice as the greatest hitter of all time. Such is not the case. Facts alone decide the issue in Hornsby's favor.

Before getting down to cases on the relative merits of Hornsby and Cobb as hitters, it should be pertinent to compare Hornsby with Ruth, even though I have already discounted Babe as a contender in this batting derby. My reason for doing so is because Hornsby, as a power hitter, has not received the recognition he deserves. Few mention him in the same breath with Ruth in this department, but let's do some analyzing.

Hornsby's home-run output fell short of the Babe's fabulous marks, but, in part at least, this was due to less-accommodating bleacher targets. In Hornsby's day, almost every National League left-field barrier, including his home field of Sportsmans Park, at St. Louis, was a good deal farther from home plate than they are today, and certainly the Rajah did not have the inviting right-field target afforded Ruth at Yankee Stadium. Had conditions been as favorable for him, he would have finished a lot closer to Babe in round-trippers. And in triples, another department where power manifests itself, Rog was head and shoulders over the Babe.

Leaving theory and getting down to fact, let's examine the total base output of these two great sluggers in their best individual seasons. Total bases are computed by crediting one base for a single, two for a double, three for a triple and four for a home run.

In 1927, the year Ruth set the all-time homer mark by hitting 60 circuit smashes, the sum of his total bases was 417. Hornsby, in 1922, ran up a total-base figure of 448. Surprising? Certainly the figures give indisputable evidence of Hornsby's great power. And, when we realize that Rog also led Babe by a comfortable 16 points

in their lifetime percentages, I'm sure you will agree he outranked Ruth as a hitter.

Now let's settle the Hornsby-Cobb issue. Rog was only nine points back of the Georgia Peach in their lifetime batting averages. Yet Ty's nine-point advantage is not sufficient to offset Rog's superior distance clouting. On this basis alone Rog should gain the top rung.

At first glance, the records of these two rivals would lead one to believe that Ty was king. He leads by a large margin in hits—singles, doubles and triples. But bear in mind that these great accomplishments, comprising records which no other player ever has equaled, were achieved through a remarkable durability rather than through any superiority over Rog. Ty's longevity alone enabled him to pile up a big edge in these departments. Actually, Rog's percentage of hits is about equal to Ty's, and in extra base hits he overshadows him. As stated above, Rog had 448 total bases in one season. Ty's best year discloses a total base output of only 367.

Cobb's best individual season home-run total, made during the lively-ball era, was an even dozen, in both 1921 and 1925. He never hit as many as ten at any other time in his career. Compare this to Hornsby's 42 in 1923, 40 in 1929, and 39 in 1925. The lifetime home-run totals of these two rivals show Rog leading by a tremendous majority of 302 to 118. This huge gap would have been widened even further if Rog had played as many games as Ty. The marked difference in each player's power is indisputable.

The "runs batted in" column and distance hitting are almost synonymous. Unfortunately, R.B.I. figures were not kept during a good part of Cobb's playing days. However, in the years of record, which happen to fall during the lively-ball era starting in 1920, Cobb's best individual years were 1925, when he batted across 102, and 1921, when his total was 101. In 1924, he totaled only 74 while playing the full schedule of 155 games. Compare these figures with Hornsby's 152 R.B.I.'s in 1922, and 149 in 1929. Both men invariably batted in the third or fourth slot in the batting order, so the figures are self-explanatory.

But there are other reasons, aside from the power angle, which show why Hornsby was the champ. From 1921 through 1925, covering five successive seasons, he batted for an amazing, over-all average of .402. Ty's five best years were from 1909 through 1913, his average being .396 for that period. These are the high-water marks of baseball history. No other player ever has come close. So, when



we take each of these players at their peak, Rog actually out-hit the Georgian in percentages, *as well as power*. Can there be any better evidence of his superiority?

Rog also topped Ty for the best individual season honor, his record-smashing year being 1924, when he hit for an average of .424, tops for this century. Ty was close with his .420 in 1911, but again Rog was in the van.

Both players batted over .400 three times, the only players to hold this distinction. George Sisler, who batted over this fabulous mark twice, is the only other player to hit in that select circle more than once. Hornsby's fourth best mark was .397, Cobb's was .390.

The less-lively ball was dropped after 1920. The moguls reasoned that a livelier pellet would make for more home runs and help to increase attendance, which it did. There are those who will argue, then, that since Hornsby played more than Cobb after its introduction, Rog has an advantage when making hitting comparisons. On the surface it would seem so, but in reality Rog doesn't.

Eliminating the principals involved, we find that, prior to the introduction of the rabbit ball in 1920, two American Leaguers, Larry Lajoie and Joe Jackson, batted over .400. In the National League there were none who reached that mark during that same period. In the span of thirty-two years since the lively ball has been in use, four batters, Sisler, Heilman, and Williams in the American, and Bill Terry in the National, exceeded the magic figures. With two batters topping .400 in twenty years with the dead ball in use, as compared to four in thirty-two years with the lively ball, there is little indication that the lively ball made it any easier to bat for a higher percentage.

Without question, the lively ball produced more home runs. Then why doesn't it help in amassing higher batting averages?

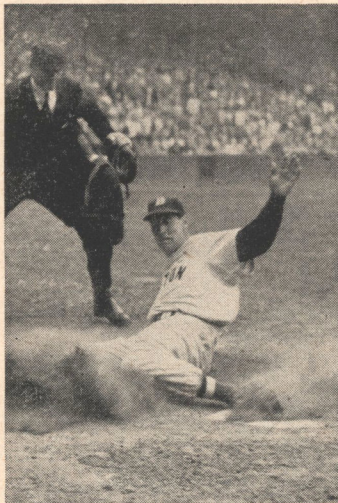
Baseball, like other sports, has not stood still with time. The pitching in the 1920's was better than it had been a decade earlier, and it is still better today. Other departments of play likewise improved, including fielding. The Bill Doak glove, which was a vast improvement over any glove previously used, was invented just as the lively ball came into use, adding still further to the proficiency of the fielders. All these combined to offset the advantage of hitting against a lively ball.

There is a curious fact in connection with the ten leading batters which may have escaped your notice. There are only two right-handed hitters among them, the other eight batting from the port side. Hornsby and

Heilman are the exceptions. Perhaps this has no special significance, but it most certainly has some bearing upon any discussion involving the respective merits of Hornsby and Cobb.

Ty, a wonderful bunter and a flash at the getaway, was a streak going to first base. His left-side stance gave him a decided edge over Rog, as it enabled him to beat out bunts and infield hits, swelling his average no little via this medium. Rog, too, had fine running speed, but it helped little going down the line to first base. He was slow getting away from the right side of the plate, due mainly to his vigorous follow-through swing, and therefore infield hits were a rarity with him. The nine-point difference in their lifetime totals would be completely erased if bunts and infield hits, which are not real hitting in any sense of the word, were eliminated.

While there always has been a marked similarity in the shape, size, weight and resiliency of the balls used in both the American and National Leagues, there was one significant difference in the old days. The National League ball had its seams raised, but the junior league preferred to use one



If you're patriotic, you might pick Ted Williams, of the Marines. But you'd be wrong.

with a smooth surface. Aided by the additional spin which could be imparted to a ball with raised stitches, National League pitchers threw far more "breaking stuff," thus giving their circuit a reputation as a "curveball league." Ty batted against the smooth seam during all of his playing days; Rog did not. How much this affected them is difficult to say, but it

would seem that the difference in balls gave Ty a slight advantage. Almost any batter will tell you he'd rather swing at fast balls than at curves.

Both men had a fair share of injuries, of a type that did not keep these hell-for-leather players out of the line-up. However, there is no evidence that Cobb ever had to play under the severe injuries which beset Hornsby in 1926.

In that season, a heel spur, similar to the one which belabored Joe DiMaggio several years ago, and a painful neck injury, caused by a fall, hampered Hornsby so much that he wound up hitting only .317 that year. Contrast this with his .402 mark over the five seasons prior to 1926, and then note that he bounced up again to .367 in 1927, the year following his injuries. Had he been of sound body in 1926, it is reasonable to assume he would have batted at his normal pace of from fifty to ninety points higher than the .317 mark of his off-year. If this had been the case, a good proportion of Ty's lead of nine points would have melted away.

A study of the styles of these two artists should be interesting. Cobb invariably hit to left field. Hornsby was a straight-away hitter, his longest belts going to right center and left center. Perhaps his average would have suffered if he had been strictly a pull hitter, such as Joe DiMaggio and Ted Williams, but it is certain he would have been an even more prolific home-run hitter had he pulled the ball consistently.

The two men had entirely different stances at the plate. Ty hugged the plate, crouched, and held the bat with his hands several inches apart to aid bat control. The position of his hands no doubt had a great deal to do with the fact that he did not pull many balls to right field. Rog stood as far away from the plate as the batter's box permitted, and also stood in the extreme rear of the box, as far away from the pitcher as possible. He always seemed relaxed, his feet comfortably apart, with no signs of any tension whatsoever. He never swung at a ball so much as half-an-inch inside the plate, forcing the pitcher to put the ball well away from him before he swung, and thus enabling him full leverage for power. In the six years we were teammates, I don't ever recall seeing Hornsby break a bat by hitting a ball on the handle.

In talking with Howard Ehmke, at the Chattanooga, Tennessee, winter meetings, following the Chicago Cubs-Philadelphia Athletics World Series of 1929, the big blond pitcher told me he could not understand how Hornsby could possibly hit an outside pitch consistently because of his deep position in the batter's box.

Ehmke, a surprise starter in the first game of that series, struck out thirteen Cubs that afternoon, with Rog a victim three times. Howard, a puzzling, right-hand sidewheeler, with an unusual "hesitation" pitch, a type which today might be termed an illegal delivery, made a fine-hitting Cub team look very feeble indeed.

I told Ehmke that Rog actually preferred a ball well away from him, and, that while he had made Rog look bad in this one game, it should not be taken as a criterion. All he had to do was remember that Rog hit for a tremendous average every year. Certainly, if he had a real weakness, it would have been spotted by National League pitchers, and it would have been impossible for him to scale the heights as he did. Actually, Howard was way off the beam: Rog's stride toward the plate, with upper-body weight well into the ball; his grip down on the end of the bat, and a straight left arm at impact, enabled him to maintain good plate coverage. The leverage afforded by this style was also chiefly responsible for his great power.

All of the foregoing should settle the Hornsby-Cobb hitting controversy. Summed up, I have proven Rog had greater power, drove in more runs, and, while both were at their peak, actually batted for a higher percentage. These most certainly more than discount Ty's nine-point lead in their lifetime percentages, a lead which was gained mainly by his speed of foot and not through an ability to meet the ball squarely. Hornsby is king!

Most modern fans know little of the background of this great hitter. An abbreviated story on the fabulous Texan's career should therefore be pertinent. Interspersed are observations and views made as a result of my long association with him.

As a player, Rog kept distinctly aloof from his teammates. He was what is usually described in baseball circles as a "loner." Perhaps this was because he had nothing in common with most other ballplayers. He never went to a movie or stage show of any kind, he never indulged in card playing, and he rarely read a newspaper, claiming that any, or all, of these could affect his batting eye. Inciden-

tally, his large tawny eyes, not unlike a mountain lion's, always fascinated me.

He was seldom around the hotel when on the road, and he usually insisted on rooming by himself. He never smoked, drank, or chewed tobacco, as so many of the old-timers did. Hard to approach, difficult to understand, he seemed to have nothing but contempt for the usual likes and dislikes of the average player. There wasn't an ounce of tact or diplomacy in his makeup in those days. Silent and taciturn to a degree, when he did speak he said what was on his mind, with little regard for what anyone else thought about it. Such was his creed, and from this one can gather he was a rugged individualist indeed. This made him the delight of most sports writers, his refreshing candor enabling them to add much spice to their columns.

There always has been a common bond between Hornsby and me, ever since the day, more than thirty years ago, when I reported for my first professional assignment to the Orange, Texas, training camp of the St. Louis Cardinals. On that occasion, and unlike his usual attitude toward other players, Rajah singled me out for special attention almost immediately.

Upon my arrival, he fell into step with me on the walk from the railroad station to the hotel, talking quite freely and making me feel at ease in my new and strange surroundings. Later, when manager Branch Rickey shifted him to third base to give me a shot at Rog's normal second-base post, he showed not the slightest resentment, and in fact gave me some tips on second-base play. Just what prompted this special attention is difficult to understand now. Perhaps it was because he too had come up the hard way, and felt really sorry for this skinny, eye-glassed, undernourished kid from the sandlots.

Honesty compels me to state that Rog was an ordinary player, aside from his great batting skills. Blessed with fine running speed, he never made use of this talent as a base runner. He never seriously tried to master the art of getting a "break" for an attempted steal, nor did he ever learn to slide well. His glaring weakness on fly balls is only too well known, and he was something less than adroit at tagging base runners.

Why he should have these weaknesses is rather puzzling, for certainly he had an abundance of courage, fine co-ordination, and a very good pair of hands, as evidenced by his steady fielding of ground balls, plus his adeptness as pivot man on double-plays. But, as a result of these deficiencies, Eddie Collins invariably is given the nod over Rog as the experts' choice



A dark-horse candidate could be Rogers Hornsby, now manager of the Cincinnati Reds. And Specs makes out quite an argument for the fiery Rajah, often ignored as a great clouter.

for second-baseman on their All-Star teams. They figure Eddie's fine fielding, great base-running and outstanding smartness, more than offset Rog's superior hitting and slugging abilities.

Rog loved his steaks, believing it was essential for an athlete to indulge in a high-protein diet. He was also a late riser, and would sleep as late as his duties permitted. An article entitled "Sleep for Your Socks" once appeared under his name, the title of course implying that a large amount of sleep would help a player to produce base hits.

Racetracks always were in Rog's blood. His betting led him into all sorts of difficulties, not the least of which were several brushes with Commissioner Landis. Most baseball men cringed before the old judge when called on the carpet, but not Rog. He told the commissioner his off-the-field activities were his own business, and no one else's, not even the judge's. He refused to heed Landis' warnings, and continued to bet when and where he pleased.

On one occasion, a Cincinnati bookmaker sued Rog for a tremendous amount of money, claiming it was due him for bets he had placed for Rog. The courts cleared Hornsby of these charges.

This, however, plus the menacing figure of Landis always before him, should have affected his batting. If it did, nobody ever would have been aware of it. However, there can scarcely be any doubt it hurt him in other ways. It may have been partly responsible for his being shifted from pillar to post during a large part of his career, and later being permitted to drift out of the major-league circles for fifteen long years.

Following his first full season as a manager in 1926, when he led us to the first pennant and World Series triumph in St. Louis history—the latter over the redoubtable Yankees during the height of their greatness—Rog demanded a showdown between himself and General Manager Branch Rickey. Owner Sam Breadon was forced to make a choice between the two, and naturally he strung along with Rickey, since Branch's progressiveness in building up a farm system already had begun to make the Cardinals a power in the baseball world. Rog's ultimatum led to one of the most sensational deals in major-league history. Perhaps no other manager was ever fired within a couple of months after winning a world championship; yet Hornsby was traded to the New York Giants for Frankie Frisch and pitcher Jimmie Ring.

It was inevitable there would be a clash between two such indomitable figures as John McGraw, manager of the Giants, and Hornsby. Sure

enough, after finishing the 1927 season, Rog was traded to the Boston Braves, where, in May of the following year, he succeeded Jack Slattery as manager. Again his stay was short. He now moved on to Chicago, where his big bat helped the Cubs battle their way to a pennant in 1929.

After being with four National League clubs in as many years, Chicago became a more secure spot for the Rajah. When Joe McCarthy resigned in the fall of 1930, to move over to the Yankees, Rog was named manager, a post he held through the 1932 race.

His breach with Rickey and Breadon long since healed, he now returned to the scene of his greatest glory. The Cardinals engaged him as coach and pinch-hitter, since his playing days were over at the age of 37. However, this was of short duration, a sudden midsummer shift finding him an American Leaguer for the first time.

~~~~~  
It usually takes me more than  
three weeks to prepare a  
good impromptu speech.

—Mark Twain

~~~~~  
I'm sorry for any man who has  
not the imagination to spell  
a word two ways.

—Mark Twain

~~~~~  
Rickey is generally credited with the move which made Hornsby manager of the rival St. Louis Browns, where he served his longest term, this time for more than four years. Then, at the close of the 1937 season, poor clubs and weak financial backing finally forced him out of the picture.

Apparently his major-league career was over, for none of the clubs seemed interested in him during the long years which followed. However, he never lost interest in baseball, always waiting for the chance to return. He kept his contacts by attending games regularly at Comiskey Park and Wrigley Field, in Chicago, where he made his home.

He had brief flings with Baltimore, Chattanooga and Oklahoma City, and at various times operated baseball camps for young hopefuls at Hot Springs, Arkansas. He also conducted baseball clinics for a Chicago newspaper during the summer months, broadcast games at Chicago one season, and was hired as batting coach during one of the Cleveland Indians' spring training trips.

Finally, in 1950, he returned to the game officially, as manager of the Beaumont, Texas, club, where he immediately forced recognition by winning a pennant with a club which had wallowed deep in the second division the previous season. He moved up a peg in 1951, this time to Seattle, in the Pacific Coast League, where once again his team finished on top.

Now they're bidding for his services. Three major-league offers for 1952 followed, from among which he chose the one tendered by Bill Veck, of the St. Louis Browns. Undoubtedly, a fat three-year contract, fine financial backing, and a fairly good farm system, which the dynamic Veck was bound to expand and develop, combined to make the St. Louis Browns his choice.

The rest is history. He got the Browns into high gear at the start of last year's campaign, making them the talk of the circuit for a few weeks. When they leveled off, a bombshell exploded. Veck suddenly announced that Rog had resigned, with his three-year contract paid in full. Rog's only comment was a laconic, "My contract specifically stated I was to run the club. Figure it out for yourself."

Surely this was the end. Who would again risk hiring the tempestuous Texan? His entire history had been spotted with rifts and breaks between himself and owners.

However, a certain young gentleman—one of the game's ablest executives—has thought otherwise. Disappointed over the lack of progress of his Cincinnati Reds, under the guidance of the likable Luke Sewell, and realizing the need for a change to a more colorful, forceful, and dynamic leader, Gabe Paul chose Hornsby to succeed Sewell as manager, early last August. The club's fortunes improved immediately. Under Rog's leadership, the team won twenty-five and lost twenty-two for the balance of 1952, despite the use of three rookies in the regular line-up.

Will Gabe and Rog hit it off? The answer is yes, in my humble opinion. Paul and Veck are as far apart as the poles. What happened at St. Louis is unlikely to happen at Cincinnati, even if Rog is as direct and forceful as ever. While retaining the reins, Paul is sure to permit Rog his head, which is something that Veck would not do.

It has been a long road back. Time alone will determine his permanence as a baseball figure, but it is my belief this duo will be responsible for a distinct rise in the Reds' destinies. While it is unlikely Hornsby's future as a manager ever will match his great batting exploits, he has what it takes to make him one of the game's ablest and most successful leaders. •

# Too Late For Glory



Illustrated by MILLER POPE

**In the other war,  
he'd been a hot pilot. Now, in Korea,  
he was on KP—with his wife  
and her new boy-friend looking on.**

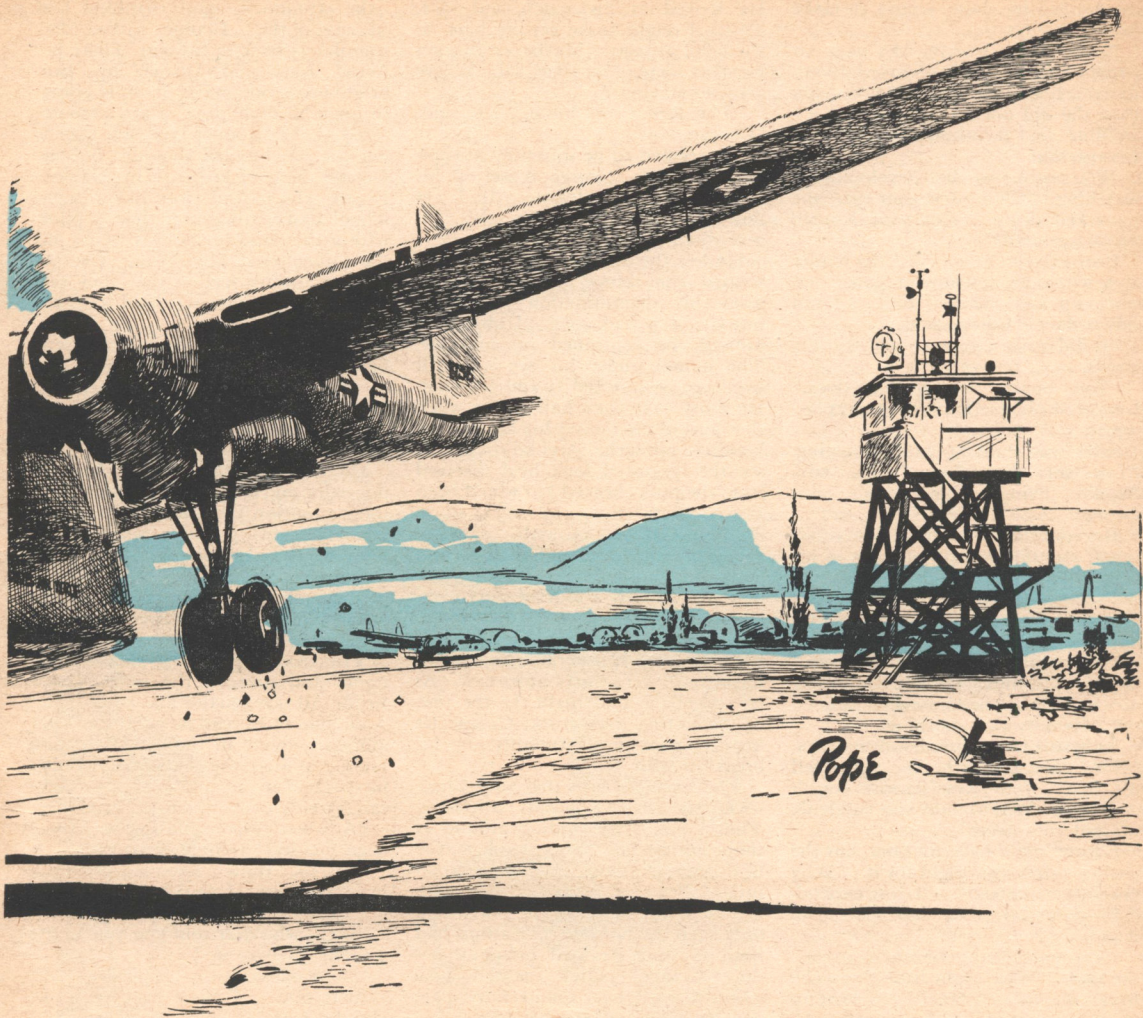
**By ALBERT S. WILSON**

**G**EORGE BRADLEY HAD BEEN IN THE FAR EAST for three days and in Pusan for less than an hour. He was walking stiffly through the crowded streets, bruised in body and spirit, when all at once he noticed the tall blonde girl coming out of a roadside shop.

His first thought was automatic: There was something a guy ought to look into. And then the girl turned her head, and he saw it was his wife!

Someone bumped him abruptly from behind. A Korean civilian in rumpled khakis brushed by him, and George realized he'd stopped dead in the middle of the street. He'd known, of course, the magazine Sally worked for now had assigned her to this area. The possibility they might eventually meet had crossed his mind more than once, but he was still unprepared.

She was wearing her hair differently now, tied back in a businesslike way at the nape of her neck. She looked very trim, very buoyant.



A tall major, wearing jump boots to compensate for a quartermaster patch, had her by the arm and they were both laughing about something. They had reached the corner now, beside an Army jeep. George still stood hesitating, and then Sally saw him.

Their eyes met, and he watched the quick flush of astonishment sweep across her face, fading into an expression he could not read. The major was trying to hand her into a jeep. George saw Sally draw her arm free impatiently, saying something without turning her head. Then they both stood there waiting. As he jostled his way toward them, George found himself inanely conscious that the major was wondering whether he would salute.

He did not. He grinned the right sort of wryly amused grin and said, "Hello, Sal. Are you going to read the 'isn't-it-a-small-world' line, or should I?"

"George! George, what on earth—" Which was

a fairly trite line itself, and not up to her usual standard. Her eyes, on whose predominant brownness or greenness he had never decided, were slightly shadowed with confusion. There was a suggestion of heightened color in her cheeks. He found a remote pleasure in the fact that meeting him could still in any way upset her.

He felt the major's appraising glance taking in his wings and the somewhat faded fruit salad left over from Italy. Then Sally pulled herself together and said, "Paul—Major Raines—I'd like you to meet my husband; I guess we *are* still married officially, George."

The major said, "Glad to know you, Lieutenant," and appeared anything but glad. He was a large, competent-looking guy and he stayed close to Sally, making it clear that old priorities didn't cut any ice with him.

George tried to seem casually indifferent. He had his pride. But it galled him to think she hadn't waited even until the matrimonial ashes cooled. The situation

was all very awkward—the three of them standing there, trying to make bright conversation.

"I see you're wearing the new Air Force uniform," Sally observed. "Very natty. It's more becoming on you than the old one."

"Blue is definitely my color," George said.

"You seem to be developing a matching patch around your eye," she remarked dryly. "Get your Korean verbs confused?"

Instinctively, he touched the tender area where an instrument panel had come up and smacked him. "I ran into a door," George said.

"It did quite a job on you," said the major.

"You ought to see the door," George replied. He was underplaying it; very off-hand.

Sally was studying him, frowning. "You got that, flying," she said. "You're flying again, aren't you, George?"

He admitted it with modest reluctance, mentioning the number of his squadron. The major looked impressed. "I've heard tell," he said. "Fly those new high-speed cargo ships, don't you?"

"We're just converting to them," George told him. He felt it unnecessary to add that he himself had joined the unit only that morning.

Sally still faced him, hands on hips. "Why?" she began hotly. "Just tell me that! Your Reserve unit wasn't activated. Why should you suddenly up and volunteer?"

George could have told her, but the setting didn't seem right for it. "Why not?" he countered. "I was expendable—no children, no dependents, no wife."

"So you decided to be a hero again," she said. "What right have you to be back in an airplane? A beat-up thirty-five-year-old, with shot reflexes." She stood glaring at him. It was not the reaction he had expected; he had thought she might be touched, her old feeling for him reawakened.

**O**BLIVIOUS to the interplay, Major Raines shifted his feet impatiently. "Look," he said in a resigned voice, "we might as well all sit down somewhere and have a drink."

"Why don't we?" George said.

"Let's not, if you don't mind," Sally said. Her eyes were pure green now, glinting dangerously. "Maybe you boys think this is all pretty cute, but I seem to be fresh out of modern attitudes today!"

She was burned up, all right. The cause of it all hit George suddenly. He supposed his blundering into her like this had messed up things between her and the major. But he went on playing it casually, the way

a proper discarded husband should. He looked at his watch and said, "Well, I ought to be getting back to the field, anyway. Maybe we can get together some other time, Sal. Where are you staying?"

"The Red Cross hostel," she said. "George, I—"

She seemed to be softening abruptly. Too late, George regretted his hasty decision to leave. "If I get down this way again," he said, "I'll give you a call."

He left them there, and walked off toward the motor pool. A block away his determination weakened, but the jeep had gone. Upbraiding himself, he continued on his way. The mouse under his eye was still swelling; he touched it and frowned. He must have been half asleep when that gust of cross-wind hit him on the landing approach. And he could still see the disgusted look he'd received from the pink-cheeked kid who'd been his co-pilot. First, to crack up a brand-new transport, with the whole squadron watching, and then to find Sally with another man. It was a heck of a way to start a tour of duty overseas.

The cargo squadron George had been assigned to operated out of an improvised strip thirty miles east. As he rode back that night, in the rear of the jolting mail truck, George let his thoughts dwell ruefully on his break-up with Sally.

The business with that silly Chadwick girl hadn't meant anything. They'd just been kidding around at the country-club dance, and maybe he'd been drinking a little more than usual. But then, Sally said that finding them out there on the porch had only been the finisher. Relations had been growing strained before that—only George hadn't realized *how* strained until he'd found Sally, pale and dry-eyed, packing her bag.

He'd made the mistake of trying to kid her out of it. After that, he'd told himself she'd tire of her job with the news magazine and come back. On both counts he'd been wrong, but somehow he'd never figured on another man. . . .

In the morning, fate hit him another low blow. Sorenson, the CO, called him in, smiled sweetly, and hung the job of squadron mess officer on him.

"You can't fly until that mouse goes down, anyway," Sorenson said. "Besides, you're about the only one around here who might be able to handle it—more mature, know your way around in the Air Force, and that sort of thing. I want this dysentery epidemic licked. I want to know why this outfit is behind the door every time those extra Stateside rations are handed out. Any questions?"

What could you say? Mess officer—the crummiest, most thankless job in any outfit! George scuffed disconsolately back to his tent. There he found Katz and Doane, his two bright-eyed roommates, happily going through his flight gear. Katz, a moon-faced Mickey Rooney type, was fingering the hand-tooled shoulder holster George had picked up in Naples. Doane, who looked more like a high-school basketball center than a pilot with a thousand hours, was trying on the soft-collared Mae West. George had an uneasy feeling that they expected his equipment would soon be up for grabs.

"The British Mae Wests were even better," he offered, striving for an air of easy camaraderie. "I remember one time in North Africa, when a gang of ME-109s bounced us out over the water—"

He finished the story, plowing doggedly on, long after he could see their attention faltering. He had an idea they were recalling his ground-loop of the day before. The easy acceptance into the lusty brotherhood of the squadron, which he'd counted on, somehow wasn't coming off.

**T**HE next day, George donned fatigues and invaded the cook shack. Inside, all was squalor and confusion. A platoon of Korean mess boys milled aimlessly about in the smoky atmosphere. Willett, the rodent-faced little mess sergeant, sat on an inverted GI can, glumly contemplating the scene.

"Are you responsible for this garbage factory?" George demanded.

"No, sir," Willett answered promptly. "You are. I put out the chow, but the mess officer is responsible."

"Well, who ever told you you were a cook?" George said.

"Some officer at the repple-depple," Willett said. "I came overseas as a laundry man."

"Then at least you should be able to keep the mess trays clean," George parried weakly. "Come on, let's get started."

Merely to take stock of the situation required all morning, and it was a depressing experience. The two Korean section bosses could speak no English and communications had completely broken down. The stove burners were grease-clogged; the portable refrigeration unit was scarcely cooler than room temperature; the sterilizing equipment was out of order. George resisted an impulse to run; the sooner he brought a minimum of order to this chaos, the sooner he would fly. Sighing, he rolled up his sleeves.

At nightfall, filthy and exhausted, he made his way back to his tent. The job was barely begun. Next door Doane and Katz were playing poker, a game from which he had

been politely excluded. His request for another pass to town had been refused by Trask, the operations officer, with an incredulous snort. George sat on his cot and painstakingly began a letter to Sally—a letter designed to play tenderly on her emotions as she pictured him sitting there in his tent, lonely and tired after a grueling day aloft. Aloft! The odor of greasy dishwater hung mockingly about him. Angrily, he crumpled the letter and threw it away.

For the rest of the week George toiled in the mess hall, while the planes droned overhead. He located an interpreter and re-established communications. He reorganized the refrigeration and managed to get the sterilizing system functioning. By Sunday he took enough time off to corner the flight surgeon and have his eye examined. The doctor admitted George's vision was no longer impaired, as far as his limited equipment could reveal, and finally cleared him to fly. He did so reluctantly, after tapping George's knees, checking his depth-perception, and babbling about the difficulties some older men had in adjusting to hotter aircraft and operational conditions. But when he did give in, it didn't seem to help. George watched in vain for his name to appear on the flight schedule.

When the squadron's conversion to the new ships was completed and every other pilot had been flying them for a week, George lodged a beef with Sorenson. After all, he pointed out, he was a veteran with two thousand hours, counting civilian time. He ought to be up there giving the kids the benefit of his experience.

He'd get his chance to fly, Sorenson told him, but at the moment—He'd noticed the improved conditions in the mess hall, he said. George had done a good job of stemming the dysentery, but the chow still stank. The boys would be flying hard, and getting these new, hot-landing jobs in and out of short fields was no picnic. As an old Air Force man, George must know the importance of decent meals for morale, and he was counting on him.

George was not inspired. Let someone else take over the mess hall if they thought they could do better, he decided. But he found his indifference hard to maintain.

In the cook shack, Willett spent the week destroying rations with unerring consistency. Not even the canned foods were proof against his incredible malpractice. Each day George watched the men file glumly down the mess line. Some, overtaken by a sudden loss of appetite, would leave without waiting to be served. Others

carried their laden trays to the tables with faces averted, as though offended by the odor. And as they sat toying with the sodden mess before them, their glances, filled with infinite self-pity, fell full upon George.

Unable to restrain himself, George cornered Willett in the cook shack.

"Good Lord, man," he pleaded, "you're not boiling laundry! Why the devil don't you follow your cookbook?"

Willett regarded him, unabashed. "What cookbook, Lieutenant? I'll bet there isn't one of them things this side of the States."

George sighed. Some day he was going to catch Willett without an answer. "All right," he said, "if a cookbook is all we need, I'll darned well find us one!"

His offer had a certain selfish motivation—it provided him a reason to request a pass to Pusan. But the problem of finding his cookbook temporarily wiped out all thoughts of seeing Sally. Willett was right: There was not an English-language cookbook to be found in the cluttered shops of the city. He was ready to give up, when suddenly another possible source occurred to him. He parked his requisitioned weapons-carrier in front of the Red Cross hostel and ventured inside.

Three uniformed girls, off duty, sat sprawled in cane chairs. "Is Sally in?" he inquired cautiously.

"I think she's over at press headquarters," the angular blonde said. "You got business with her?"

"Well, not just yet," George said. He had no wish to let Sally know the degrading nature of his mission. "Listen, girls," he began, "how would you like to do something for your country?"

The blonde eyed him without enthusiasm. "We've heard," she said, "that song and dance before."

"You're wrong," George said. "This is on the level." He strove for a serious tone and surprised himself at its sincerity. "I'm a squadron mess officer, and we're stuck with a cook who thinks he's boiling laundry. My boys are getting fed nothing but slop. I've never cooked anything more than a hamburger in my life, but I can follow directions. What I need is information—nothing fancy, just some steps to follow so I can put out a few semi-edible meals. How about giving me a hand?"

The girls regarded him silently. "Sounds kind of goofy," one said. "But if you're really serious—well, I've often thought you could do something with that C-ration stew; you know, jazz it up a little with a dash of something in the gravy."

George produced pencil and paper. "Shoot," he said.

For an hour he scribbled frantically. The girls had eaten Army chow since leaving the States, and all had ideas for improving it. George juggled terms like "braise" and "sauté," and tried to keep the proportions straight. Finally he heard the outside door close behind him. "Hi, Sal," the blonde called. "Got any recipes? We're helping the Lieutenant here write a cookbook."

George stuffed his notes into his pocket and looked up from the circle of girls. It was Sally, all right—fists jammed in her trench-coat pockets and frowning—but looking so pert and wind-blown that a sudden ache of longing filled him. "Hello, Sally," he said. "I've been waiting for you—just passing the time with innocent parlor games."

Something kept her from speaking. She looked at him and his bevy of women in silent exasperation.

George rose. "I thought you might have dinner with me."

"Look here, George," she began, "if you think that I—" The other girls were listening intently. With a sigh of resignation, Sally led him onto the street.

"You haven't changed much, have you?" she said. "Cookbook, indeed! Do you think those girls were stationed here for your personal amusement?"

Circumstance permitted no rebuttal. George handed her into the weapons-carrier, took the wheel, and eased into the stream of GI traffic. "How's your military friend, the major?" he inquired.

Sally glanced at him suspiciously. "Paul is fine," she said firmly.

"He strikes me as a sort of stuffy type," George said; "the kind of guy who reads a chapter of the Officer's Guide every night."

"He doesn't care for you, either," Sally said. "He says you talk like a comic-strip fly-boy. He thinks you're immature."

SILENCE fell between them, while he wrestled the wheel and the weapons-carrier jounced over the roughly paved streets.

"Know a good place to eat?" he asked.

"One's as bad as another," she said. "I'm not very hungry."

He wasn't either. They drove on, talking with a strained casualness about unimportant things. At last the road emerged from the confines of the city. George pulled off at a rutted crossroad and parked.

"Listen, Sally," he began, "you're not serious about this Paul character, are you?"

"I'm not sure you have the right to ask a question like that any more," she said dryly. "But if it helps you

ego any, I don't think I am. At least, not yet. I don't suppose you can really understand this, George, but the sort of thing I had for you takes a while getting over."

As she spoke, it seemed to him that her lips trembled. Then, almost without conscious thought, his arms were about her. He turned her to him and held her tight against his chest, kissing her for all the weeks he had wanted to kiss her when she was beyond his reach. For a moment her lips were warm and soft, her body pressed close. Then, in an instant, she was all elbows, pushing him away.

"Sally," he pleaded, "I want you back."

"Hold it, pal," she cried, breaking free. "There'll be none of that. You're not going to get around me that way!"

"But you didn't really want to tear yourself loose," he said. "You know it!"

"So what?" she burst out angrily. "There never was anything wrong with that part of it! I walked out on you because one day I took a good look and found I was married to a perennial college boy, off on one long fraternity party. All I needed to make me even surer was to find you back in uniform, playing the irresponsible glamour-boy again. You're not going to change, George."

She finished and sat staring determinedly straight ahead. George fumbled for an answer. "But I have changed," he protested. "Maybe I should have stuck with the plant, but at least I quit the country club. Here I am, a patriotic volunteer, looked up to by my buddies, a father to the youngsters in the outfit, eagerly accepting responsibilities."

"Nuts!" she said. "The biggest thing on your mind is whether you'll get your next Air Medal on schedule. I wish I could believe you, but I know you, George." Her words were positive. Yet he seemed to detect a little less firmness in her tone. She had turned to face him again, in spite of herself. Perhaps she was weakening, he thought. His arm slipped softly beneath her silky head. Gently he bent toward her.

OUT of nowhere, an elbow caught him in the ribs. "Please, George—" Her voice was shaky but determined. "I think you'd better take me home."

An hour later, as he drove back along the road to his base, George tried to find some comfort in defeat. At her door, when he'd asked to see her again, Sally had not been able to refuse him. And when she'd touched his hand, telling him to be careful, he was almost certain there had been deep concern in her voice. Wait till he had started flying, he thought, and

won the respect of the other pilots and the promotion his seniority entitled him to. Then maybe Sally would realize that he was a changed character, after all.

But Sorenson appeared in no hurry to have him drop his pots and pans and start giving the squadron the benefit of his aerial know-how. Instead, George found himself slowly taking the actual cooking out of Willett's ineffectual hands. In the steamy cook shack he hovered over the battery of stoves, his improvised cookbook in one hand. He stirred, tasted, and fought a grim battle of compromise with the rations delivered from the supply depot in Pusan.

IN the end, his timing at least showed improvement. The coffee was brought to the tables hot and freshly brewed. The hash no longer charred in the pans while waiting for the potatoes. He bombarded the supply depot with pleas for supplementary rations. He experimented boldly with seasonings and scoured the neighboring villages for fresh vegetables. But if the men noticed any improvement in the meals, they did not say so.

In fact, they laughed at him. The idea of the has-been with the combat stories and fancy flight gear winding up on K.P. seemed to produce smiles and wisecracks wherever he went. His dignity was gone. Everyone, down to the lowliest airman, third-class, now called him "Pappy," a patronizing nickname some wag had hung on him.

George bore their gibes with patience. Thankless or not, the men deserved the best that he could do, after the exhausting concentration of a day spent nursing their overloaded ships back and forth across the peninsula's mountainous terrain. He wished vainly for some delicacy with which to bolster their morale. And then, as though fate had at last laid a friendly hand on his shoulder, he heard about the steak.

The word which he pried out of the driver of the supply truck sounded authentic. A shipment of steak had just come in, destined as a treat for the boys in the rest camps. But there was enough to go a little farther, probably no farther than the nearest headquarters mess.

George waited to hear no more.

Two hours later, still wearing his food-stained fatigues, he skidded the weapons-carrier to a stop in the supply-depot compound. In the office, beside the warehouse buildings, a bored staff sergeant glanced up from a comic book as George burst in at the door.

He identified himself. "Heard you had some extra steak hanging around," he said. "How about letting me have some for my boys?"

The sergeant eyed him with mild irritation. "No soap," he said shortly. "You unit mess officers ought to know better than to come barging in here, messing up the routine."

George snatched the comic book out of his hand. "Look here," he said, "I happen to know you've got some steak to spare! I'm not going to leave it to a bunch of lard-tailed company clerks!"

The sergeant heaved his well-padded frame from the chair with ominous calm. "Maybe you don't understand English, Lieutenant." He walked to an inner door, rapped respectfully, and opened it. "Sir, there's some squadron mess officer out here, raising a stink about some steak. You want to straighten him out?"

George brushed past him into the room and addressed the back of the officer who sat with polished shoes cocked on the windowsill. "Listen, sir," he blurted, "those boys of mine have been flying their tails off, and one good steak dinner would do as much for their morale as a weekend pass! I'm not trying to chisel anything from the guys who are fighting this war, but before I'll let a bunch of base section scavengers take—"

The officer turned. George noticed the gold oak leaves before he recognized the face. "Did some one say you were a mess officer?" the man behind the desk asked dryly. It was Major Raines.

THE world teetered slightly on its axis, then resumed its steady spinning. Under the major's detached scrutiny George felt as though he had lost his trousers.

"There must be some mistake," the major said. "Aren't you the guy who passes himself off as a daring fly-boy? What are you doing wearing greasy fatigues and smelling of dishwasher?"

George squared his shoulders and looked the major in the eye. "Okay," he said, "so you've got me good. Rub it in all you want to. Tell Sally I'm the louse she always thought I was. I know you're going to, anyway. But let me have that steak!"

"Incredible!" said the major. "The Red Cross gals said they'd helped you with a cookbook, but we figured it was a gag. I suppose you wrote those letters from your outfit that I've been getting, too—very moving! We might have sent you some extra goodies, if we'd had any." He tilted back in his chair and shook his head slowly. "So you were going to be a hero and impress Sally? George, old man, I'm afraid you are something of a sap!" Abruptly, he bent forward, scribbled on a requisition slip, and handed it over. "Okay," he snapped, "your precious boys will get their steak! I only wish there were some way I could





"Listen, sir," George blurted. "Those boys of mine deserve steak." The officer turned. "Did someone say you were a *mess officer*?" It was Major Raines. The world teetered slightly on its axis, then resumed its steady spinning. George felt as though he had lost his trousers.

keep you from getting a piece of it. Now get out of here, and this time make damned sure you salute!"

Outside, George watched without elation as the steak was loaded into the weapons-carrier. Fate had again clubbed him squarely between the ears. When at last he drove back through the town, he recognized the major's jeep parked in front of the Red Cross hostel. The son-of-a-gun was wasting no time in cutting his throat, he thought bitterly. There was no point in even trying to see Sully now.

He reached the field as night was settling and crawled glumly into the sack. All too soon it was morning, and burrowing farther into the blankets did not relieve his misery.

He was disconsolately pulling on his shoes when an operations clerk stuck his head through the tent flap. "The CO wants you, Pappy, on the flight line."

The flight line! George leaped up. Grabbing his gear, he headed for operations on the double.

He found Sorenson standing beside a newly overhauled plane. The CO dropped an arm on George's shoulder. "Okay, Pappy," he said. "Frankly,

the flight surgeon's against it, but your MOS says *pilot*, so you rate another crack at it." He nodded toward the plane. "This ship's due for a test hop before she goes back on the line. She's all yours."

In a daze George climbed the ladder, made his way forward, and slipped into the left-hand seat. He'd flown these hot new transports twice before—counting the ill-fated ferry trip when he'd joined the squadron—but the breadth of the instrument panel still staggered him a little. He looked out at the massive engines and four-bladed paddle props, more horses in each one than the total power of the plodding old ships he'd flown in his refresher course back in the States.

His co-pilot came up the aisle and slacked into the other seat. George glanced over; it was the CO. "Don't mind me," Sorenson said; "just logging my time for the month." He stuck a cigar in his mouth and stared disinterestedly out the window.

It was another deliberate blow to George's pride. He was getting a check-ride, just like a fledgling cadet. But this was no time for righteous indignation. Let his performance show them a thing or two!

He started the engines, taxied out, and ran through his pre-takeoff check. He got the green light and he gunned her around and lined up. Down at the other end of the strip, almost within spitting distance, he could see a line of straggly trees. He hadn't remembered that the strip was so short. He kicked off the brakes and poured on the coal. Acceleration jammed him in his seat. The trees came rushing at him—and gripped by a compulsion to clear them, George hauled back on the stick. The ship rose prematurely, dropped back with a thud, then bounced raggedly into the air. "Whoops! A little rusty, I guess." George shot a covert glance at Sorenson. The CO was still looking out the window, chewing his cigar.

George flicked up the wheels, bent on redeeming himself, and rolled smartly into a slow climbing turn. Bang! The ship yawed violently as the port engine backfired and quit cold. Sorenson was springing a single-engine procedure on him. George dived for the throttles, hit the feathering button, and fumbled with the trim tab. Out of the corner of his eye he spotted the altimeter needle tumbling, and frantically twisted the

wheel, barely lifting one wingtip out of the trees. He pulled up, almost stalling, and finally got her leveled off with one prop feathered. He'd allowed himself to lose five hundred feet and get ninety degrees off course.

Sorenson reached out and switched the port engine back on. His face was still bland, but his cigar looked frayed. "Shoot a landing," he said.

GEORGE maneuvered into the pattern. The throttles felt slippery and perspiration was beginning to burn his eyes. From the air, the dirt strip looked smaller than a postage stamp. George tilted over and came sliding down the approach, fighting the same sudden feeling of impotence that had assailed him the day he'd made that other ill-starred landing here. This feeling was foolishness—in his time he'd landed planes with hotter stalling speeds on strips that made this one look like La Guardia Field. But still the ground seemed to rush at him with unmanageable speed. The crosswind was trying to skid him into the trees. With infinite concentration he dragged in over the treetops at the runway's edge. He was in the groove . . . beautifully. This time he was doing it right. He began to break his glide, feeling for the ground as it skimmed just beneath his wheels. He came back on the stick, waiting for the gentle touch-down. The ship settled, sank suddenly, sickeningly; the ground rushed up from ten feet below where it was supposed to be, hit the ship with a jarring impact, and tossed her back in the air. The trees at the far end were almost in his lap. George fire-walled the throttles. There was nothing else to do.

He circled the field again, without looking at Sorenson, and came in for another try. Once more his approach looked perfect. He started to level off, trying to gauge his altitude. The brown earth swam blearily under his straining gaze. Now it was just beneath his wheels, now twenty feet away. The ship was settling under him, and another drop like the last might buckle the undercarriage. He spied his shadow racing along the ground ahead. Carefully he applied power and eased farther down. The shadow and the plane converged. When they seemed ready to merge with one another, he brought the stick back in his lap. After a moment the rattling of pebbles against the wheelhousing told him he was on the ground.

George taxied back to operations and parked. Sorenson rose, eyeing George speculatively. "That landing was pretty slick," he said.

They clambered down from the plane. A truck carrying equipment crates backed up to the loading door.

"Well, Pappy?" Sorenson asked; he seemed to be measuring his words. "You want to take her on the flight to Seoul?"

George hesitated, gathering courage to admit what the last few minutes had made humiliatingly clear to him. "No," he said at last. "One trick landing doesn't change anything. The doc was right—my co-ordination and depth-perception are both shot. I'm over the hill for this kind of flying, and you know it as well as I do."

"Yeah, I know it." And Sorenson grinned unaccountably. "But I wanted to see whether you had enough sense to realize it yourself."

The whole affair seemed to have left the CO remarkably undisturbed. He said: "All of us oldsters start slowing up eventually, Pappy, but I wanted to make sure your judgment wasn't shot, too. You know, with Trask up for rotation, you're the logical guy for operations officer."

He turned away, leaving George to ponder his words in baffled unbelief. He'd figured Sorenson for a shrewder type. You needed a special sort of guy to run Operations. Experienced, sure, but a fellow for whom the other pilots had affection and respect.

Too confused to fathom this bizarre development, George started for the tent area. Word of his removal from flying duty seemed to have preceded him. The thinly veiled rairery of the past few weeks was nothing to the open grins which he attracted now. No need to picture the effect which news of his final deflation would have on Sally. The major would have her well prepared for it.

Thoughts of the major reminded him abruptly of the gala repast scheduled for the midday meal. He recalled the steaks, and suddenly his forehead grew damp at the thought that Willett might try boiling them. His fatigue temporarily forgotten, he headed anxiously for the cook shack.

He found the steaks still intact and Willett in his usual state of nervous inertia. George cleaned the feedline of a broiler. He burned a finger in hot grease. At last, as an impatient pounding sounded on the mess-hall door, he gingerly slid the first batch of steaks under the fire.

For an undetermined time he labored on. Through the smoky confusion, mess boys staggered out to the serving line under laden trays and returned endlessly for more. A grease fire flared up in No. 4 stove. On hands and knees George extinguished it, rescuing the last half-dozen steaks from incineration. A mess boy transferred them to a tray and whisked them off. George had not even tasted one himself.

Behind him, a sudden hush fell among the kitchen troop. Still on his

knees before the stove, George turned. Sally and the major stood looking down at him with amusement.

George rose slowly, reeking of onions and grease, and wiped his hands distractedly on the front of his shirt.

"Paul told me," Sally said, "but I couldn't believe it! So I made him bring me out to see for myself."

"Very white of him," George said bitterly.

"Oh, don't thank me," the major said. "I was trying to knife you; but my calculations misfired."

George could think of no sarcastic rejoinder. He looked at Sally. Her eyes seemed gray tonight—deep, luminous, and strangely warm. "I wanted to believe it," she said. "All that talk of yours about being a changed man, full of responsibility, looked up to by the rest of the outfit. But I thought it was just a line—until Paul broke down and told me how you came in and fought for those steaks."

George blinked. The full import of her words filtered slowly through his fatigued brain. From the mess hall came an impatient stamping of feet. Voices rose and blended into a demanding chant. Indignantly he decided that the callous ingrates were calling for seconds.

THE stamping continued. George heard his name voiced with raucous insistence. "*Looked up to by the outfit!*," he said bitterly. "That sound much like it?"

Grimly, he showed himself at the mess-hall door. The chanting broke into a disorganized shout.

"They sound admiring enough to me," said Sally. "What do you want, darling—wreaths, formal speeches?"

George looked. Vainly he searched the rows of grinning, shouting faces for signs of ridicule. Someone started a chorus of "For he's a jolly good fellow . . ." It trailed off in sheepish laughter and applause. There were shouts of "Speech, Pappy!" and "Are there any more at home like you?"

Slowly George began to realize that in his grimly introverted mood, he had completely misjudged the spirit of the banter and insults of the past few weeks. He felt himself grinning foolishly, unable for the second time that afternoon, to think of anything to say.

The major had disappeared, sourly absenting himself from the touching reunion scene. George felt Sally's hand touch his.

"Pappy," she repeated speculatively; "I think that's sort of cute."

And then, to an accompaniment of whistles and wolf-calls, George treated the squadron to the sight of their fatherly old mess officer soundly kissing his wife.

**FACT THAT RIVALS FICTION:** *The only clues were two dead blondes in a tank car, and the trail five months cold.*

By **W. A. SWANBERG**

# the Case of the Starving Canary

IT WASN'T THAT DIMPLED ADELE DRUCKER was asking for trouble. She merely was unaware of any such commodity. In her simple Germanic good nature, it never struck her that there might be larcenous and homicidal souls lying in wait to pounce on the unwary.

All this became evident when she arrived at the home of Mrs. Ella Abbington in East St. Louis, Ill., bringing a vaudevillian's parade of luggage—a steamer trunk, several smaller bags, a cage containing a Hartz Mountain canary, a box of cookies, and a purse the size of a side of beef.

Adele gave Mrs. Abbington a rib-cracking hug and dropped the purse on the floor in her enthusiasm. It popped open, spilling a dazzling display of United States currency—thick rolls of century notes, fifties and twenties.

Ella Abbington's eyes popped open too. "You shouldn't carry your money around with you



Illustrated by EMERSON BARRON



like that, Adele! It isn't safe. You ought to use travelers' checks."

"Too much drabble," Adele said placidly, bending and sweeping the cash into the purse much as a woman uses a broom and dustpan. "To have just dollars iss so much easier."

Mrs. Abbington was further concerned when she learned there was a cool \$35,000 in the purse. At 25, Adele's blonde Teutonic beauty might be a wee bit on the bosomy and plump side to suit American taste, but no one in his right mind could quarrel about her solvency. Her father, Fritz Drucker, a rich fish wholesaler of Danzig, had recently died and left the whole of his 300,000-mark estate to Adele and her sister Ida, two years younger. Adele had promptly sailed for America to visit relatives, spend some of those marks, and maybe even find a husband.

IN Chicago she had spent a week with her uncle, Oscar Drucker, who had left the Fatherland as a youth to seek his fortune in the new world, and had wound up as a foundry foreman. Now she was in East St. Louis to visit with Mrs. Abbington, Oscar's former wife—who had since remarried.

"Onkle Oscar was glad to see me," Adele said, "but such a man for betting on horse games! In not one thing else iss he interested!"

Mrs. Abbington was painfully aware of Oscar's weakness for "horse games." When she had been married to him, his broad, stolid face was always hidden behind a racing tip-sheet. He had met with so little success in this that the Druckers were often hard put to pay the rent and meet the grocery bill—a state of affairs that had had considerable to do with their separation. Oscar had likewise remarried, obviously without swerving an iota from his one grand passion.

The Abbingtons liked the jolly Adele and they showed her a whale of a time. They took her to East St. Louis' finest beer garden. They escorted her aboard a Mississippi River excursion boat for a moonlight cruise, and they took her across the bridge to St. Louis to listen to the opera and to eat wienerschnitzel.

In the course of all this entertainment, the thoughtful hosts saw to it that Adele was introduced to a couple of eligible local bachelors, Ernest Metzger and Waldo Ewert by name. Both Metzger and Ewert seemed pleased to meet a genuine German heiress who was fairly sprouting with good-will and greenbacks. The Abbingtons, still worried about Adele's highly casual manner of handling money, finally coaxed her to carry only a couple of hundred around with her. The rest was placed in a shoebox wrapped with grocery twine and left in what they considered a safe place—a dresser-drawer at the house.

Adele seemed to take a particular fancy to Metzger, and was delighted when he made a date with her for the following week. In fact, she was having such a ripsnorting time that she made plans to stay for another fortnight or more. At least that was what she said. But after she had been a guest of the Abbingtons for only eight days, she decamped in a most bewildering manner.

She left the house one afternoon saying she was going for a walk. Three hours later, while Mrs. Abbington was keeping dinner warm for her, Adele called on the telephone. Her ordinarily pleasant voice was now dripping with icicles.

"Ella?" she said. "It iss Adele. I haff decided to stay with other friends. I will send a man my luggage to collect. Good-by."

With that she hung up. Ella Abbington seemed thunderstruck as she turned to her husband. "Why—she sounded almost angry!" she exclaimed. "Could we have hurt her feelings in some way—perhaps said something she misunderstood?"

Henry Abbington didn't savvy it either. Next day, a man arrived in a wagon; he was bearing a note written in Adele's somewhat mangled English: "*Please to give this man my things and dollars. —Adele.*"

With some asperity, Mrs. Abbington showed the heiress' luggage to the man, a sharp-looking customer in his forties. He loaded the trunk, the bags and the caged canary into his wagon. He also took the cardboard shoebox

containing almost \$35,000 of the money Fritz Drucker had amassed in the fish business in Danzig. Then he drove away.

Still puzzled, Mrs. Abbington telegraphed her former husband, Oscar Drucker, in Chicago, asking if Adele had returned there. Oscar's wife wired back—collect, of course—saying that the heiress had not been seen or heard from since she had left some ten days earlier.

Mrs. Abbington was suddenly assailed by worry. She now regretted giving the luggage and the \$35,000 to that fellow without even asking him who he was or where he was taking it. The good housewife had not forgotten Adele's habit of lugging around a peck or so of greenbacks. Possibly some smooth scoundrel had noticed this and somehow primed Adele for a swindle. Then again, Adele might have suffered one of those sudden mental lapses one heard about, and was not responsible for her actions.

After a sleepless night, Mrs. Abbington worked herself into a nervous panic. She telephoned the police and reported Adele missing. An officer took down the description—five feet three, blonde, blue eyes, weight about 120 pounds, heavy German accent, owner of a canary of which she was very fond.

The cop also asked about money.

MORE than a month later, on August 11, the German freighter *Anna Schultz* was six days out of Galveston en route to Hamburg, with a miscellaneous cargo including 15 empty railroad oil-tank cars from which the wheels and trucks had been removed. The cars were lashed to the deck, but the pitching of the ship in heavy seas made necessary a daily check to make sure that the moorings were taut and sound. One of the seamen noticed that the circular door at the top of one of the tank cars had become unlatched and was banging with each wave. He scrambled up the side ladder to latch it.

Then, for no reason at all, he peered inside the huge tank and saw what appeared to be a human body sloshing around in the oily bilge at the bottom.

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Captain Muller was summoned, and there were a good many "Donnerwetters!" when the body was caught with hooks and hoisted out. There were still more Teutonic expletives when a second body was found inside the tank and likewise hauled out.

The ship's surgeon examined the corpses and pronounced them to be those of two blonde young women, apparently in their twenties. Their condition indicated that they had been dead for several weeks, but the surgeon was able to detect similarities in features and physical characteristics which convinced him that very likely they were sisters. There was another similarity too—each body had a bullet-hole in its head.

CAPTAIN MULLER would have given his supply of grog to learn just how two murdered girls came to be immured in his cargo in such a fantastic manner, but all he could do was place the bodies under refrigeration until the *Schultz* reached Hamburg two weeks later. There the bodies were removed to the morgue, and Muller was directed by officials of the steamship line to sponsor an investigation when he got back to Galveston. . . .

It was not until four months later, in December, that Captain Muller brought the *Anna Schultz* once more into port at Galveston, where he immediately got snarled in a woeful tangle of red tape and indifference. The Galveston police admitted it was odd that two dead blondes happened to be in Muller's tank car. But they pointed out that the murders—if they really were murders—must have been perpetrated somewhere along the railroad line as the cars were being sent to port. It was somebody else's headache—not Galveston's.

"Vell," Muller demanded, "den who should I see to investigate it?"

The Galveston cops couldn't help him there either. Maybe those tank cars had come from hundreds of miles away, so there was no telling just where the bodies had been popped in. In fact, Muller got the distinct impression that the local authorities were not too interested in grappling with a mystery so weird that a solution seemed highly improbable.

It was no skin off Captain Muller's nose either if the mystery were never solved—but an order was an order. He had been directed to make an investigation. He looked around for a reputable private detective, and by sheer dumb luck he found Joseph G. Hunter, probably the one man in the world who possessed the proper blend of experience, imagination and persistence to cope with such a formidable conundrum.

Joe Hunter was seated in his office with his feet on the desk, when the

captain came in. A tall, lantern-jawed Texan of 47, Hunter was bored stiff. After eleven years as a railroad detective and a long stint as a deputy sheriff, he had hung out his shingle as a private eye, and was doing all right in a financial way. But he was fed to the teeth with such routine chores as checking on errant husbands for suspicious wives. His sleuth's soul was suffering slow starvation.

When Captain Muller described the case to him, Hunter's size twelves hit the floor with a bang.

"I'll take it," he snapped. "Of course, there are a couple of conditions. First, this is going to take time and will cost your steamship line some money. Second, there is no assurance that the case can be solved. After all, the murders took place about five months ago and the killer may be in Tibet by this time."

The captain agreed, and Hunter, grabbing a fountain pen and lighting a smelly corn cob pipe, took notes on the meager details that were known. He jotted down the specifications of the two slain girls and took the numbers of all 15 tank cars which had been shipped aboard the *Schultz*, including that in which the bodies had been found—Missouri Pacific tank car No. 735548.

That was the sum total of what Hunter had to start with, but here his years as a railroad detective came in handy. He knew that close records were kept on the meanderings of all railroad cars. He knew exactly where to go and who to see.

At the Galveston pier, a clerk dug up the manifest on the cargo carried by the *Schultz* the previous summer. From it Hunter learned that the 15 tank cars were part of a train which had been made up in Chicago and had traveled southward by slow degrees via St. Louis, Little Rock, Texarkana, Shreveport and Houston. In its journey it had rolled across five States on the tracks of eight different railroad lines.

Right away Hunter knew what a Tartar he had tackled. The bodies could have been placed in the tank car at any stopping-point along some 1100 miles of trackage between Chicago and Galveston.

THERE WAS, however, one fact which Hunter felt should work in his favor. The sudden disappearance of two young blondes must have created a hubbub wherever it had happened. It must have been banner headline material for the papers.

Hunter scanned a railroad map, then composed a query which he telegraphed to police chiefs in 27 cities and towns along the train's route.

Next day, he had 27 replies, all of which could be summarized by the

pithy wire received from the chief in Newport, Ark.:

NOT EVEN ONE MISSING BLONDE  
HERE, MUCH LESS TWO.

That staggered Hunter. If two vanished girls couldn't raise a furor, what could? It was apparent that there were no easy short-cuts in this case. He packed a bag, grabbed the next rattler for Chicago, and mapped out a campaign. He would start in the Windy City, travel south along the route taken by the tank cars, inquire about missing girls at every scheduled stop, and see what happened.

But in Chicago, a freight dispatcher for the Illinois Central tossed him another jolt.

"That train left here on July 3," he said, consulting his records. "It contained 15 tank cars, all right—all of the 15 on your list except one: Missouri Pacific tank car 735548 wasn't among them."

Hunter boarded a southbound local, stopping at way stations and sniffing for No. 735548. Three days later, in St. Louis, he hit pay dirt.

"Sure enough," said the dispatcher there, after checking his books, "one of them 15 tank cars pulled in here with a stinking hot box. We cut it out and substituted MoPac 735548. That was on July 7."

"Where'd that car come from?" Hunter wanted to know.

"Across the river—over in the East St. Louis yards."

HUNTER hailed a hack and rode across the river to police headquarters in the Illinois town. Soon he was talking with a detective named Keating, a big man with tobacco-stained whiskers, who handled missing-persons investigations when he was not busy subduing malefactors or bringing in drunks.

"Two skirts you're looking for?" Keating asked. "And you say they must've disappeared around July 7? Lemme check my file."

His file consisted of a dog-eared tencent notebook with a burlesque girl artistically hand-drawn on the cover. He burrowed into this and shook his head. "Nope—not two girls; but one blonde was reported missing on July 6 by a lady named Abbingtion."

"Just one," Hunter said. "Well, what did she look like?"

Keating rattled off the description of Adele Drucker. Hunter pricked up his ears, for it was an exact description of either of the two victims, who had been remarkably similar. "Did you locate her?" he asked.

"Yes and no," Keating said. "We couldn't trace the dame, but a week later somebody telephoned us she was safe and sound and on her way back home to Germany."

That Germany business struck Hunter as an odd coincidence. The two girls he was interested in had gone to Germany, too, though in a condition that could hardly be described as safe and sound. He decided to give this lead a look-see, even though in some respects it didn't seem to click. He called on Mrs. Abbington at her Walnut Street home and explained his mission.

"Did you find Adele?" she asked. "Find her?" Hunter parroted. "I thought you reported to the police that she was on her way back to Germany."

The housewife looked bewildered. "But I didn't do that! I reported her missing, and the police said they would try to find her—and that's the last I heard."

SOMETHING was fishy here. Someone else—doubtless someone with an axe to grind—had made that telephone call to the police, thereby putting the quietus on the search for Adele.

"Well, well," said Hunter. "Now, let's straighten this out. First, did Adele Drucker have a sister with her in this country?"

"Adele has a sister, yes. Her name's Ida and she's two years younger, but they're alike as two peas. You see, Adele and Ida intended to sail for America together; but then Ida came down with influenza, so Adele made the trip alone. Ida was to follow her when she recovered."

"And did Ida visit you here?"

"No, that's another queer thing. I got a letter from Ida saying she planned to sail in the middle of June and would see me sometime in July. She must have landed, but I've never heard from her since. The whole affair is more than I can understand."

Hunter was in perfect agreement on this point, but he also felt an elated hunch that perhaps he was coming to grips with the problem. From Mrs. Abbington he learned about Adele's previous stay with her uncle Oscar Drucker in Chicago. He was a little dazed when he was told that Adele had been carrying something like \$35,000 in greenbacks.

"Thirty-five thousand in cash!" he yelled. "Who knew about that money?"

"We tried to caution Adele," Mrs. Abbington said, "but she didn't seem to care who knew about it. We knew, of course; so did some of our friends. Then there were two young men we introduced her to—Ernest Metzger and Waldo Ewert." She went on to tell him of the expressman who had taken Adele's luggage and the money.

Hunter left, shaking his head over the light-heartedness with which this small fortune had been handled. In

his time, he had met many a customer who would cheerfully commit murder for thirty-five dollars, much less \$35,000—and he felt reasonably sure that Adele Drucker would never again be seen alive. But if the other sister was still among the living, then this was not his case.

He returned to headquarters, where he dispatched a cable to the police chief in Danzig asking the whereabouts of Ida Drucker, resident of 11 Oberstrasse in that city. While waiting for a reply, he sought out Keating again. "This person who telephoned to say that Adele Drucker was on her way back to Germany," he said. "Who was it?"

"You got me," Keating admitted. "All I know is, it was a man. I ask his name to put down on my report, but he just says, 'I'm a friend of the family'—and hangs up."

The cable from Danzig arrived next day:

IDA DRUCKER SAILED FROM AMSTERDAM JUNE 12, ARRIVED NEW YORK JUNE 25. NOT HEARD FROM SINCE. RELATIVES WORRIED ABOUT HER AND SISTER ADELE, ALREADY IN AMERICA. PLEASE CONDUCT INVESTIGATION.

That last request, Hunter reflected, was hardly necessary, and he immediately dispatched another cable, this one to the offices of the steamship line in Hamburg, asking that relatives of the Drucker sisters view the two bodies in the hope of getting positive identification. That would take some time, so Hunter hopped aboard the next train for Chicago, where he looked up Oscar Drucker in his apartment on the South Side.

THE Drucker couple lived on the third floor of an ancient frame-building that smelled richly of cooked cabbage. Oscar Drucker himself came to the door carrying a racing form which he put aside with obvious reluctance. A burly, bullet-headed man of about 50, he clearly believed in comfort, for he was in his stocking feet and had unlatched his galluses so that they draped around his knees. Oscar had emigrated to America as a young man of 19, and had succeeded in losing his German accent along the way.

"Adele?" he said. "We have been wondering what got into the girl. Yes, she was with us here a week. She left—let's see—on June 23, to visit Ella in East St. Louis. We did not see her after that."

"Did you hear from her?" Hunter insisted.

"Not a word." Drucker spat with remarkable accuracy into a cuspidor six feet away. "It is strange, but perhaps it is easily explained. I have been thinking maybe Adele met some man and ran off with him."

Hunter had been debating the same possibility, with emphasis on a man who concealed homicidal inclinations under a romantic front. Drucker agreed that Adele was a little careless with her money. He said that Adele's sister Ida had also been expected to visit America, but that he had not heard from her. Drucker's present wife, Irene, an attractive redhead considerably younger than he, bore him out on these points, although her attitude toward Oscar made it plain that she would prefer to disagree with him.

None the wiser, Hunter thanked the Druckers and headed south again. But when he reached East St. Louis, there was a cable from Hamburg waiting for him at police headquarters.

The two bodies had been identified beyond question as those of Adele and Ida Drucker!

AT that moment, Joe Hunter felt much like an antique fancier who, rummaging around in a dusty attic choked with junk, stumbles upon an authentic Chippendale. He sat down, shoved his hat back on his head and hammered out a theory that fitted the facts so far as he knew them.

Adele Drucker, of course, had been lured away from the Abbington home with her luggage, canary and \$35,000 by someone who had managed to poison her mind against Mrs. Abbington. Then the scoundrel scored the hat trick by getting in touch with Ida Drucker when she landed in New York and luring her in turn to East St. Louis. He murdered the sisters, pocketed a sizable fortune, dropped the bodies into the tank car and cleared out, later adding an artistic touch by telephoning the police that Adele had been found and thus spiking the search.

Hunter decided it was about time to interview the Messrs. Ernest Metzger and Waldo Ewert, both of whom had met Adele and might have had ideas about that \$35,000.

He found Metzger, a portly brewery bookkeeper, at his place of business. Metzger readily admitted that he had been attracted by the comely Adele, but professed complete ignorance as to what had become of her.

"I made a date to take her out the next week," he said, "but by that time she had skipped out from Abbington's—a queer trick, that! Money? Well, I heard she was an heiress, but I figured all her cash was back in Germany."

That sounded a bit peculiar in the light of Adele's known propensity for displaying her nest-egg. Hunter let it lie for the moment and looked up Ewert, a nattily dressed drummer of restaurant supplies.

Ewert flatly disclaimed any interest in the well-heeled Fräulein. "I met

her just once," he said, "and that was in a large group, so I hardly got a chance to talk to her. But that made no difference, because I was engaged at the time and have since married the girl I was engaged to."

Though Hunter did not say so, he reflected that \$35,000 would send a young couple off to a flying start in matrimony. Ewert added that he had left on a sales trip the day before Adele disappeared and had not returned for three weeks.

Hunter reserved judgment on these two and struck off on a new tack. The killer, he reasoned, must have had a hide-out in East St. Louis, probably near the railroad yards. He aimed to find that hide-out. He called on Mrs. Abbington again.

"This fellow who came to pick up Adele's belongings," he said. "I want to know exactly what he looked like."

"Well—" she faltered, "I hardly remember him at all. I think he was an ordinary-looking man. He came with a horse and wagon."

"Any printing on the wagon?"

She shook her head. "Not that I

recall. I was so upset I only glanced at it as he drove away."

"Ma'am, this is terribly important! Please think hard. There must have been *something* unusual about this man—something that would help me locate him."

Mrs. Abbington pondered. "Goodness me, it was so long ago now . . . I'm sorry I can't help. All I remember is that he came in carrying this little notebook, and had a pencil stuck over his ear. He looked in the notebook and said he was to pick up Miss Drucker's baggage, the canary and the shoebox."

That was enough for Joe Hunter. A notebook and a pencil cocked over the ear were badges of a deliveryman of some kind—an expressman, probably.

There were only a half-dozen expressmen in East St. Louis, and Hunter found his man on the third try. He was Michael Garrity, a keen-eyed son of Erin whose sole business investment was a horse and wagon.

"Sure and I wouldn't forget that canary!" Garrity said. "The lady wot

hired me made me promise to carry the bird up in the seat with me—said it was delicate and wouldn't bear bouncing."

"What I want to know," Hunter said, "is where did you take that load?"

Garrity gave him a look. "Bedad, and you expect me to tell you that? That was last summer, and I've carried a thousand loads since then to a thousand different places."

"But your records, man—look it up!"

Garrity pointed a skinny finger at his head. "Here's where I carry me records, bub, and they don't stay there long. All I use is a notebook for addresses, and I throw it away when it gets filled up."

Hunter was reflecting that the lot of a detective would be far easier if people did not have a perverse habit of forgetting the most critically important details. "Listen," he said, "I've got to find out where you took that load! There's a ten-spot in it for you if you can tell me."

Michael Garrity suddenly became more interested. He gnawed at villainous-looking fingernails as he cerebrated. "It's arskin' a lot of a man," he muttered. "I remember it was over by the railroad yards somewhere—just where I don't know."

"Maybe if you drove me over there you'd remember," Hunter urged. "I'll pay you for your time, and the ten-spot to boot."

This was agreeable to the expressman. They climbed into his battered wagon and drove to a section of town near the riverfront railroad yards. They rattled up one street and down the next as Garrity strove to refresh his memory. "Seems to me like it was a yellow house with green trim," he said. "There was an Airedale next door that like to've took off the seat of my pants."

They rounded a corner into Plum Street, and there, three doors away, was a yellow house with green trim. A mangy-looking Airedale loped out and barked at the horse.

"That's it!" Garrity shouted triumphantly. "Take my advice, Mac, and watch that dog."

Hunter patted the Airedale's head and had no trouble with him, then marched up to the house and knocked. A gray-haired, motherly-looking woman answered.

"I'm from the assessor's office, ma'am," Hunter said, tipping his hat. "We're thinking of reducing your tax rate. May I come in and look around?"

He liked to call this the Hunter method of gaining entrance to a place and giving it a going-over without exciting suspicion. He had originated it years earlier and it had never failed



In Chicago, Hunter looked up Oscar Drucker, Adele's uncle, and learned nothing that seemed to have any immediate value. The man was fifty and believed in comfort—for himself.

him. The lady, who gave her name as Mrs. Hilda Mossberg, invited him in with the greatest cordiality and he engaged her in pleasant conversation as he went from room to room. It took all his self-control to repress a start when he glanced into the sun-room and saw a canary busily working on cuttlefish in its cage.

Sure, lots of people had canaries; maybe this was merely a coincidence. Still, Hunter felt a powerful curiosity about the origin of the bird. His impression of Mrs. Mossberg was that she was a sweet and wholesome housewife with nothing sinister on her conscience, but he was taking no chances.

"I was around here last summer sometime," he said. "Yes, last July it was. Seems to me someone else was living here then."

Mrs. Mossberg nodded. "Oh, yes, there was. My husband and I have a cottage farther down the river, and we always go there in the summer. We rented this place out for a while."

"I see," Hunter said. The canary burst into song. "Nice bird you have there."

"Isn't it! The strange thing is, it was left here by the man who rented the house last summer."

That did it. Hunter was convinced Mrs. Mossberg was on the level. He identified himself and partially explained his errand. "I'm interested in that man. We think he may have been up to something illegal."

"Something illegal!" the woman echoed. "Well, I'm not too surprised. Alvin and I said to each other, we said, 'There's something mighty peculiar about that fellow!'"

SHE said she and her husband had advertised the place for rent late in June. On June 29, a man who said he was the Rev. Elmer Griffin of Springfield had telephoned and made inquiries about the house. He explained that he was giving a series of evangelistic sermons in the St. Louis area in an effort to save tottering souls from the clutch of the devil, and he needed a base of operations. Informed that the house would be available furnished for six weeks at a rental of \$55, he said he would take it.

"He said he was in a terrible hurry to get over to St. Louis and give a sermon," Mrs. Mossberg went on, "so he didn't have time to look the house over. There were only two things he seemed particularly interested in. For one, he asked how close we were to the railroad yards. I told him the tracks were only a block away, afraid that this would decide him against the house. But he said no, trains didn't bother him at all—in fact, he rather liked them."

Hunter nodded. "And the other thing?"

"He wanted to be sure he'd have absolute privacy—no interruptions at all while he was there. I told him we were going to our summer home and did not expect to be back for six weeks, and this seemed to satisfy him."

All this was making sense. The Rev. Elmer Griffin—whatever his real name was—of course was the killer. Naturally he wanted complete privacy. Naturally he wanted the railroad yards handy so that he could dispose of the bodies in a convenient boxcar or oil-tank car.

MRS. MOSSBERG related that on the following morning she had received a letter containing five ten-dollar bills and one five, with no accompanying note whatever. At noon the Rev. Griffin telephoned to ask if she had received the money and inquire when he could take possession. He was still too busy saving souls to appear in person. The Mossbergs thought this a little odd, but they were anxious to get out to their summer place and besides they were reassured by the fact that Griffin was a man of God. So they told him they were leaving first thing in the morning and that he would find the front-door key in the mailbox.

Hunter had to admit it was all rather neat. The bogus parson had managed to rent the place without once being seen by the owners.

"You never set eyes on him at all?" he asked.

"Well, not exactly," Mrs. Mossberg said. "We went out to our cottage, about 30 miles downriver, but it turned out that Alvin had forgotten his bathing suit. He hated to bother the Reverend Griffin, but he didn't want to buy another one, so on the evening of July 6, when Alvin was in town on business anyway, he called at the house here.

"The lights were on, but the shades were all drawn. Alvin knocked, and pretty soon the lights went out. Finally the Reverend Griffin came to the door and Alvin explained that he came to get his bathing suit."

"Did your husband get a good look at this man?" Hunter snapped. It would be interesting if the Reverend Griffin resembled, for example, Ernest Metzger, or possibly Waldo Ewert.

"I'm afraid not. You see, he had turned the lights out, and although it was terribly hot he was wearing a big raincoat and a hat that came down over his eyes. He also had on a pair of colored glasses. Well, he said he simply couldn't be disturbed at the moment—he was having a confidential meeting with some parishioners. Finally he let Alvin wait on the porch while he went inside and brought back the bathing suit. We thought it was all rather queer."

In fact, the Mossbergs had thought it was so queer that they'd discussed it most of the night at the summer cottage. They had come to the conclusion that they would rather have their house go empty than be tenanted by such a furtive character. They even suspected that the Rev. Elmer Griffin was no parson at all but had rented the place solely to carry on some shady enterprise such as an illicit romance.

The very next day, Alvin Mossberg had driven in to East St. Louis to refund Griffin's \$55 and tell him bluntly to vamoose. But Mossberg was surprised to find the house already vacated and in a terrible state. Ketchup or something had been spilled on the dining-room rug, and women's clothing was strewn all around.

"He left the canary, too," Mrs. Mossberg went on. "The poor thing hadn't been cared for and was thirsty and almost starving. On top of that, there were two little holes in the wall, as though he had driven a poker into the plaster."

She had concealed these holes by moving a buffet in front of them. Hunter looked them over and decided they were just about the size a .32-caliber bullet would make. The rug had since been cleaned, but there was still faintly visible a stain which Hunter was sure had not been caused by ketchup. It was perfectly clear to him that Griffin's refusal to allow Mossberg to enter had been caused by the fact that Griffin had a couple of bodies inside the house which would be hard to explain satisfactorily to the landlord. Griffin had disposed of the victims later that night in the railroad yards, then fled in such a hurry that he had left behind the canary and some of the Drucker sisters' clothing.

THE big question was, who was the Rev. Elmer Griffin, and how had he lured the sisters into his clutches?

Mrs. Mossberg was of no help at all on this point. Neither were the neighbors, whom Hunter canvassed with care in the hope that some of them might have noticed the newcomer. Griffin apparently had shielded his comings and goings under cover of night, for only one housewife had spotted him at all, and this had been well after dusk. She had seen him sneaking into the house, but he scuttled inside so quickly that all she could say was that he wore dark glasses and seemed inordinately bundled up for midsummer.

Alvin Mossberg, the only person who had met Griffin face to face, returned home at noon. He, too, was singularly lean on information.

"It was dark on the porch," he explained, "and that fellow opened the door only a crack. He was so hidden



by a coat, hat and glasses that that's all I noticed."

He recalled that Griffin, both in person and on the telephone, had spoken in curiously high-pitched tones, possibly like a man disguising his voice.

"Didn't he leave anything behind except the clothing and the canary?" the detective asked in some desperation.

Both the Mossbergs shook their heads. "That was all we found," Hilda Mossberg said. "Well—he did leave two or three St. Louis newspapers, but of course they wouldn't mean anything."

Of course not. Hunter began to savor the bitter taste of despair. By dint of some seven weeks of solitary, painstaking sleuthing he had accomplished the noteworthy feat of identifying the slain girls, uncovering much of the killer's modus operandi—even locating the murder spot. Yet all this work would be valueless unless he somehow managed to put the finger on the elusive Rev. Elmer Griffin. At this point the Texan was grasping at straws, ready to try anything.

"You threw the newspapers away, I suppose," he said mournfully.

"Why, no," Mrs. Mossberg replied. "I save papers for our Ladies' Guild. We have a collection every year. They must be down in a pile in the basement."

For the first time in his career, Joe Hunter was reduced to searching for clues in old newspapers. He managed to find the three St. Louis papers left by Griffin without trouble, since the Mossbergs subscribed to a different journal. He thumbed through them slowly, eying each page in the faint hope that Griffin might have been careless enough to jot down a name or an address.

He found nothing quite like that. But in the sporting section of the second paper he noticed an account of the previous day's results at a New Orleans racetrack. The name of a nag called Faunteroy, which had finished second, was underlined lightly in pencil.

Just a pencil-mark. Maybe he shouldn't get excited about it, but Hunter couldn't help it. Unless he was completely cock-eyed, the pencil-mark was the missing link, the one clue that made light come out of darkness in a dazzling blaze. He rushed out, leaving the Mossbergs staring after him in astonishment. He made the next train to Chicago by an eyelash. His .38 was snug in its holster, and he also carried a temporary deputization empowering him to make arrests.

He hadn't told the score to the local cops, knowing that they would have been only too glad to come along

and get in on the kill. This had been his case from the start, his case alone, and he wanted to finish it off that way by bringing his man in alone.

Joe Hunter was, in fact, a wee bit stubborn on that point—maybe too stubborn for his own good.

In Chicago that night, he took a hack to the Drucker residence. He walked up the steps and knocked at the door. Oscar Drucker put on a pretty good act when he opened it to find Hunter's Smith & Wesson aimed squarely at his navel.

"Is this a holdup?" he demanded.

**D**RUCKER denied everything, but his denials sounded feeble when his redheaded wife got her oar in. Irene Drucker, it was plain, was in no mood to cover up for her horse-happy husband. Yes, she said, Oscar had left on a ten-day trip in the latter part of June, saying vaguely that he had a deal on to "sell some property." Yes, when he returned he had brought with him a pair of colored glasses. He had seemed quite flush thereafter, and a few weeks ago he had quit his job at the foundry. . . .

An hour later, Hunter and his sullen prisoner were attached together in the suspicious intimacy of handcuffs aboard a night train for East St. Louis.

"I get it, all but the trimmings," Hunter told him. "You were sore because your rich brother Fritz over in Danzig left all his money to the girls and didn't give you a mark. When Adele showed up, carrying a fortune as if it was peanuts, you decided to cash in. You followed her to East St. Louis and rented that house. But how did you get Adele to join you there—and Ida?"

Oscar Drucker was now troubled with unhappy visions of the hangman's noose. He had heard that felons sometimes escaped the gallows by giving full co-operation and copping a plea, and he decided to do likewise.

"It was easy," he said. "Both Adele and Ida were simple girls—I might even say foolish. They believed everything I told them. I telephoned Adele and told her that Ella Abbington, my former wife, couldn't stand having her around any longer. I said that Ella had written me saying that Adele was my niece and I was the one who should entertain her. Adele's feelings were terribly hurt; she agreed to move to the house I had rented, when I told her my wife would be along in a few days. Then I got her to wire the travel agency in New York instructing Ida to join us when she landed."

The murders were easy, too. Three days after Adele joined him, and his wife failed to put in an appearance, she grew suspicious, so Drucker shot her. On July 6, when Ida arrived—

only two hours before Mossberg called to get his bathing suit—Drucker helped her remove her coat, aimed his .32 at her temple and pulled the trigger. Late that night he had swiped a wheelbarrow from a near-by construction project and trundled the bodies to the railroad yards. When he saw the empty oil-tank car standing alongside a loading platform, it struck him that Providence could not have supplied a better hiding-place for his victims. It had been quite a job, scaling the side ladder and hoisting the bodies in one at a time, and Drucker's foundry-toughened muscles had come in handy. When he fled the Mossberg place at dawn, he felt sure he had committed the perfect crime. But he knew that his ex-wife might report Adele missing, and he thought it was the crowning touch



"I'm from the assessor's office," Hunter said. "We're thinking of reducing your tax rate. May I come in and look around?"

when he telephoned the police a week later to tell them the girl was safe and sound.

Hunter took in this account with the fascination with which one might listen to the whir of a rattlesnake. "And how much did you get out of it?" he asked.

"From Adele, almost \$35,000," Drucker said. "From Ida, only about \$12,000." He leaned toward the detective confidentially. "I still have a lot of it left. Maybe you could use \$25,000? All you have to do is let me off at the next station."

Hunter disabused him of any such notion. The train rolled on through the night, and eventually Drucker nodded. His bullet-head had lolled back against the cushion, and his rhythmic snores proclaimed a man with a conscience about as sensitive as that of a Jivaro headhunter.

**A**FTER a time, Hunter felt impelled to go to the washroom. The train was hitting a fast clip, and with his prisoner asleep there could surely be no risk in leaving him for a moment. He unlocked the cuffs and stole away.

Hunter had been in the cubicle labeled *Men* no more than ten seconds when the brakes screeched and the train slowed with such abruptness that he was hurled against the wall. He righted himself and dashed into the aisle.

There was Oscar Drucker, streaking it for the next car!

"Stop that man!" Hunter bellowed. "Stop him!"

Startled passengers were still trying to pick themselves from the floor as the train continued to slow. Obviously Drucker had awaited his opportunity, then pulled the emergency cord. Hunter took after him, but by the time he reached the next car Drucker had vanished and the train had reached almost a dead stop.

Grinding his teeth, Hunter enlisted the aid of trainmen in searching the right-of-way. It was pitch-black, and they might as well have sought for a mouse. In a frenzy of self-disgust, the detective spread the alarm to the police of near-by towns, most of whom had to be aroused from sleep. The train resumed its journey, leaving a furious Texan grimly trying to organize searching parties. Dawn came, but the surprisingly light-footed Oscar Drucker was not to be found.

There was nothing for Hunter to do but go on to East St. Louis, make a full and shamefaced report, and run a gantlet of sarcastic remarks from the local gendarmerie. White with rage and chagrin, the lanky sleuth had no comeback. There was only one card left in his deck, and although he realized full well that it was a lowly deuce, he played it. He telephoned Irene Drucker in Chicago and told her what had happened.

"There's just a chance that Oscar might get in touch with you," he said. "If he does, please let me know."

Joe Hunter returned to Galveston an embittered man. He collected a fat fee from the steamship line for his work, but this did not comfort him. His were the feelings of a Rembrandt who, having poured his heart and soul into a priceless canvas, sees it destroyed by flames. In the Drucker case he had encountered the kind of challenging, well-nigh impenetrable mystery every bred-in-the-bone detective dreams of solving. By a masterpiece of single-minded, single-handed sleuthing, he had solved it—then flubbed it.

**T**IME went on. People in Galveston remarked that Joe Hunter had changed, somehow—had become abstracted, morose, more taciturn than ever. But he took the trouble to send Irene Drucker an occasional box of flowers, along with a gentle reminder. Mrs. Drucker was such a sparkling redhead that Oscar might eventually begin to yearn for her. He might, sure. But probably he wouldn't.

He did. Fifteen months later Hunter got a long-distance call from Irene Drucker.

"Oscar wired me," she said. "That loafer! After what he's done, he wants to kiss and make up."

"Where is he?" Hunter demanded hoarsely.

"In Tijuana, at the races there. He even sent me money to join him."

"Wire him back to wait for you," the private eye snapped. "Then just sit tight."

This time Joe Hunter wasn't sticky about his "one-man case." In Tijuana two days later, he had with him a local detective and Deputy U. S. Marshal Ben Galloway. It took them less than a half-hour to locate Oscar Drucker in a dingy and noisy place called Peto's Bar.

Drucker, clad grandly in a derby hat and suit of uninhibited checker-board plaid, was downing a drink at the bar. In the mirror he saw the three men enter, and recognized the tall Texan, his old nemesis.

He whirled, clutching for his gun. Hunter, a handy fellow with hardware, "let him have it" without compunction. Just one bullet—but it drilled Oscar Drucker through the heart. He pitched forward, his cruel face burrowing into the sawdust on the floor, his gun clattering from nerveless fingers. He was dead when they looked him over—as dead, one might say, as his two unfortunate and trusting nieces, but with a deal more reason and justice.

When Joe Hunter returned to Galveston, there was a spring to his step and a glint in his eye. His first move when he got there was to send Irene Drucker a big box of red roses with a note saying simply, "Thanks." •



"According to this 'Are you Happily Married?' test, we're about pffft!"

# NO VACANCY!

Impossible. Klem's Kabins—they're the Kozy type, you know—always have a vacancy. But this isn't a blast at all motels, just at the ones that are all neon and no service. Sometimes, no neon.

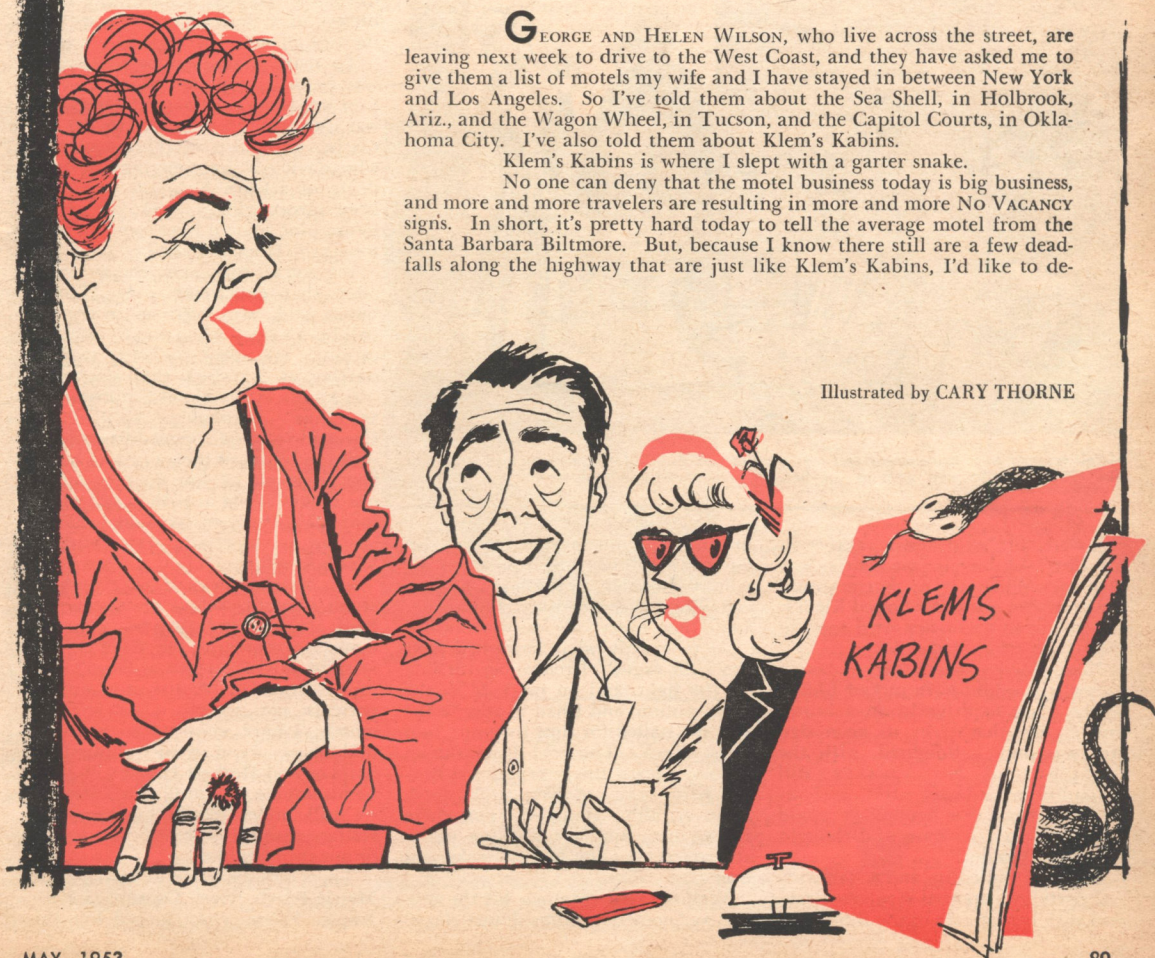
By JOSEPH LAWRENCE

**G**EORGE AND HELEN WILSON, who live across the street, are leaving next week to drive to the West Coast, and they have asked me to give them a list of motels my wife and I have stayed in between New York and Los Angeles. So I've told them about the Sea Shell, in Holbrook, Ariz., and the Wagon Wheel, in Tucson, and the Capitol Courts, in Oklahoma City. I've also told them about Klem's Kabins.

Klem's Kabins is where I slept with a garter snake.

No one can deny that the motel business today is big business, and more and more travelers are resulting in more and more NO VACANCY signs. In short, it's pretty hard today to tell the average motel from the Santa Barbara Biltmore. But, because I know there still are a few dead-falls along the highway that are just like Klem's Kabins, I'd like to de-

Illustrated by CARY THORNE



scribe some of them for George and Helen—and for you, too, if you're planning a trip this summer. Or do you like to sleep with snakes?

Klem's place is just outside of Springfield, Missouri, or maybe it's just outside of Indianapolis; I'm not sure, because I've been trying desperately to forget Klem, and his cabins, and Mrs. Klem, and the horrible night I spent in their company. Likewise, their snake.

For all my effort, though, I still recall the night as if it were the last one. I know at the time I thought it *would* be my last one.

We'd covered more than 600 miles that day, and we were pretty pooped. But we'd ignored the fundamental rule for tourists—stop early and get a good place to spend the night. Consequently it was midnight, and we

from the Late Racing edition, signed us in. "It's the law you gotta sign," she said, handing us a dirty, dog-eared tablet and a one-inch length of carpenter's pencil. Her attitude told us she felt it was all a passel of nonsense. She showed us to our hovel... er, cabin.

So, all right. Dogs don't complain about passing the night in a building a lot less than six feet long and four feet wide, and you're probably saying we shouldn't either. But most dogs I know aren't six feet two inches tall and trained to take their clothes off when they bed down. I took mine off in the car; my wife slept in hers.

And we were asleep in two minutes. It was maybe an hour later that the tickling started—around my ankles. I nudged my wife and growled at her to cut it out. I dozed off. Awhile later I was awake again; the tickling—

there, screeching all the time like an impaled buffalo. Me, I picked up an egg-crate Klem had painted to resemble a night-table, and began flailing away at the bed, at the same time yelling for Klem, the police, the fire department and a fellow I knew in Des Moines who owns a gun (he told me later he heard me clearly).

In no time, the cabin was jam-packed with people, meaning a total of three of us, the newcomer being a scraggly-faced old gentleman who'd pulled his pants on over a dirty suit of long underwear; he hadn't shaved since the day they opened the Panama Canal, and, in his haste, he'd forgotten to put in his glass eye. He yelled at me at the same time as he wrestled the egg-crate out of my hands.

"Stop!" he screamed. "It's Sam! You've found Sam!" And he pulled back the bedclothes and grabbed up the snake, which immediately curled up in his arms and looked at me as if I were Genghis Khan. "My *poor* baby," the old guy crooned, all the time patting the snake and soothing its nerves. At that moment, my wife, lifeless in a dead faint, dropped off the ceiling onto the floor at my feet.

To make a short story shorter, it was eventually explained to us that Sam was Klem's pet garter snake. He was used around the place to war on roaches, ants, mice and other predators who obviously were permanent residents of Klem's Kabins. Sam had been missing for a week, and we'd found him. You'd have thought we'd found the Hope diamond.

We got an early start the morning after that experience. As Honeybunch said, who needs more than a half-hour's sleep when you're on a vacation? We spent the next night—starting at 3 o'clock that afternoon—in a suite at the Hotel Coronado, in St. Louis. Through no fault of the Coronado's—which seemed like an elegant inn to me—it took a fifth of bourbon to get me to close my eyes, and I saw snakes as big as pythons all night long. I still see an occasional one in my dreams, especially after eating a Welsh Rarebit.

All of which is not to say there aren't some marvelous motels in this land of ours, and they seem to get more marvelous as the days go by. Despite our experience at Klem's (an unusual one, to be sure, and an experience not necessarily confined to motels; I once woke up in a thirty-dollar-a-day room in an Atlantic City hotel to find Herbert Hoover, or maybe his double, grinning down at me), we still prefer motels to any other resting-place this side of Forest Lawn, or our own bedroom.

There was the place we stayed in at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, for example. That layout looked like the



Motels seem to go to extremes—either very good or very bad. At one, a young man treated us like visiting royalty and gave us the best of accommodations and service for \$7 total.

still were sure we'd find a vacancy in a nice establishment just up the way a piece. When we no longer could hold our eyes open, we spotted Klem's; it was the first vacancy we'd seen in more than a hundred miles.

Now, anyone who's ever taken a motor trip would have picked Klem's as the place to drive by in a hurry, and I guess that's why its neon sign still was only half-lighted, with the "no" part of NO VACANCY still shrouded in darkness. But, as I say we were tired; we figured we could have slept in a haymow and thought it was the Waldorf.

Well, we pulled in, and a slatternly old party in a spotted gingham dress, and with her hair up in the front page

or slithering—on, my left leg had begun again. This time I punched my wife—a short left to the body, as I recall (she's a sucker for that punch). In no time, everybody was wide awake.

As to exactly what happened next I'm a bit vague. I remember turning on the light, and on my wife in the same motion, and I had to admire the way she stalled for time by going into a fast clinch. The wild shriek she let out was a tactic the International Boxing Club may not have understood, however, although I did. For, there in our bed, and just ducking under the covers, was the biggest snake you ever saw.

Well, sir, Honeybunch hit the ceiling, and somehow miraculously stayed

Sultan's palace, and they had to get a writ to make us clear out of the joint at noon the next day. It was that wonderful.

I recall we had a Spanish-style brick cottage, with garage attached, and with an enclosed, private entrance from our car to our bedside. There was a tile bath and stall shower that would have had Hollywood consumed with envy. There were Mexican *objets d'art* on the walls and strewn around the mammoth bed-sitting-room that would have set the curator of the Museum of Modern Art to drooling. And there was a small kitchenette complete with refrigerator, electric stove, sink, and enough porcelain to have built a swimming pool. Just outside our front door, there was a swimming pool.

In addition to all that—which they let us have for seven dollars for the two of us—our cottage sat in a large circle of poplar trees, over a lawn they might wish they had at the White House and in the center of which was a handsome springhouse that contained cases of Coke, ginger ale, soda and mineral water, and enough ice cubes to pave a path to the Pole—all for free. It's all I can do right this minute to keep from picking up the phone and making a reservation.

I've already mentioned the Sea Shell, in Arizona, which is part of a chain, and the Capitol Courts, in Oklahoma City. These are two stopping-places that particularly stand out in my mind because of their unqualified excellence (our suite at Capitol—for eight bucks double—consisted of a bedroom with two *double beds* instead of twins, a huge dressing-room complete with vanity and more mirrors than you'll find in Versailles, plus a bath of a size and degree of excellence one might tend to associate with Baden or Warm Springs).

But the way to run a motel never was more convincingly demonstrated to us than it was one night in El Paso.

We'd told the proprietor of the Wagon Wheel, in Tucson, when we left that morning that we were heading east. She volunteered to make a reservation for us in El Paso, and she put in a phone call immediately; we had to twist her arm till it broke to get her to accept the thirty-five-cent charge for the call.

That night—a Sunday—we drove, tired and hungry, through the home-going traffic of El Paso, wondering what lay ahead of us in the way of accommodations, while my wife checked the snake-bite kit and the Flit gun. We were such hardy veterans by that time that we constantly envisioned the worst.

We needn't have worried. As we drove up the circular drive to the doorway marked "Office," the door

flew open and a young man with a crew-cut, dressed in a business suit and beaming a smile that would have shamed the head clerk at Tiffany's, leaped to greet us.

"You must be the Lawrences!" he effused. We wondered what made him think so.

"Because you're our last arrivals for the day," he said. "All our other accommodations have been gone for hours, and, as you can see, our No VACANCY sign has been lit for some time."

He opened both doors of the car swiftly, handed me out as if I were Good Queen Bess, and—as I recall it now—vaulted over the top of the car to get at my wife.

"Mrs. Lawrence," he cooed, "won't you step in and warm yourself before the fire while Mr. Lawrence signs the

in our private carport, took the bags out of the trunk, and escorted us to the door of the cottage, where crew-cut stood at attention (he'd apparently run ahead and opened up, turning on the soft lamps and depositing a bucket of ice cubes on the coffee table). Both crew-cut and the car-parker fell back in horror when I offered them a tip.

As they left, crew-cut, bowing and rubbing his hands and still beaming like Dr. Fu Manchu, told us to be sure to let him know if there was anything we needed, if there was anything wrong, or if we had any questions.

"I have just one," my bride said, coming out of her coma and staring wide-eyed around our sumptuous layout. "What happened to the red carpet?"

Although seemingly impossible, crew-cut's beam grew more beatific



The other extreme, I regret to say, is something else again. At another, the office was also the bar, and four characters who resembled Jesse James' gang played poker in one corner.

register? We're just serving after-dinner coffee in the lounge, and you might care to meet some of our other guests."

My wife gaped at crew-cut and at me, slipped numbly out of the car, and walked through the office door while the two of us stood like a guard of honor at Westminster Palace. Once inside, she was given a fresh-cut rose, was shown to a deep-cushioned chair before a big open fireplace, and soon was making up her mind whether she preferred cream or sugar or both in her coffee. I signed the book and paid seven bucks in silent astonishment.

Back outside again, another bright young man ran ahead of our car with a flashlight and directed us to our quarters. He expertly parked the car

and his bow more pronounced. "I'm so sorry," he soothed. "It's at the cleaner's—but I can assure you, the next time you stay with us we'll have it rolled out to the highway the minute you reach the city limits." And he salamed into the night.

Now, admittedly, such goings-on are still far from typical, and they are described here simply because they are exceptional. But more and more motels are approaching this norm in their treatment of their guests, and if the country's hotelkeepers are wondering why the roadside inns are getting more and more of the tourist business they might take a page from the latter's book.

In that same town of El Paso, for example, I recall driving up one time to one of the biggest and best-known

hotels in town, one in which I presumably had a reservation, and, while leaving my car double-parked in the thick of the downtown traffic (another advantage for the motels), scurried inside—to be told by a clerk they had no record of my reservation, that they had no vacant rooms, and that they hadn't the faintest idea what could be done about it. Sleep in the park seemed to approximate this boniface's attitude, and I definitely will in the future, if I'm ever in El Paso and all the motels are full.

**G**EORGE and Helen tell me they are going to follow Route 66, and maybe you'll be getting your kicks this summer on the same highway. In which case, this might be a good time to warn you all against a night's lodging we once had along this thoroughfare, in a little town in the Texas Panhandle.

We stayed there on this particular night because old Tom Bixby was in an Army camp near by, and we didn't want to drive through without having a visit with him. Tom since has told us he saw nothing in Korea to approximate the squalor of our surroundings that evening, and he still marvels at the bonds of friendship that tie us together—strong enough that night to keep us from bidding him a fast good-by and heading out of town.

In the first place, we arrived in town in a driving rain, and headed immediately for the best hotel. One look at this abattoir, however, and we asked about motels. We were told there was one—May's Courts—just west of town. We looked up May and her courts.

I know now it was the rain, and the darkness; but I guess we passed May's place five times before a weary citizen took the time to tell us exactly where it was—in back of the feedstore, of

course. In back of the feedstore, next to the coal-yard, hub-deep in the mud from the pig corral. May's office was the three-point-two beer joint and snooker parlor that any fool would have recognized instantly. I left Honeybunch in the car while I went in to register.

Inside the steamy, gritty windows, I found a couple of battered pool tables, a bar perhaps seven feet long, and four citizens playing cards at a grimy, beer-ringed table. In order, clockwise, these characters appeared, in the haze of smoke, to be Gabby Hayes, Jesse James, the Cisco Kid and Al Capone. May—herself a ringer for Ma Barker—leered at me from behind the bar, her chins resting comfortably on a bosom that had to be seen to be believed, and her fat arms folded on the woodwork in such a manner as to convince the onlooker that a larger pile of bare flesh had never before been assembled in one place.

She had, she said, a vacancy. She'd have been a liar if she'd said there ever had been an evening she didn't have a vacancy. "It'll be two-and-a-quarter," she grumbled, apparently in disbelief that any male ever had had that much at one time. I told her we'd take it.

Again there was the business of apologizing for our having to sign the register, and you could tell from May's attitude that she was opposed to such nonsense in almost the same degree as she was opposed to people who rented her diggings with the idea of using them for the entire night. While I signed, I was conscious of the silent stares of Gabby, Jesse, Cisco and Al, who'd paused in their card game to leer at me in what I was certain was a contest to see which one could appear most evil. May finally handed me a rusty key, said we were to take Number Eight, and went back to picking her teeth.

Number Eight was a darb. This one, so help me, had twin beds—two Army cots stacked one on top of the other, upper- and lower-deck style! There was maybe two feet of extra space in the room beyond that taken up by the cots, and one of these corners contained the shower.

You heard me—shower. A rusty pipe that ran up the wall, elbowed at the ceiling, and pointed again at the floor, with an encrusted tin can for a nozzle. Water dripped ceaselessly to the bare floor. There was no curtain surrounding this invention, and no place in the floor for the water to splash except into a drain under the lower cot. When either one of us took a shower, the other one had to be up on the top cot clad in oilskins, with all our clothing and belongings behind him, and ready on a moment's notice to abandon ship. And I'm not making this up.

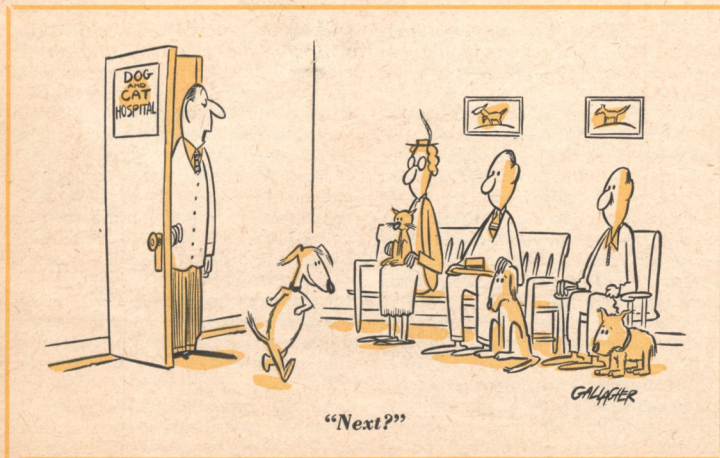
We'd phoned Tom at the base after we'd decided to go to May's place, and maybe the pause with which he had greeted this news should have tipped us off. But he finally agreed he couldn't think of a better spot, and he'd meet us in our quarters for a drink before we went out to dinner. "I've always wanted to see what that joint's like," he laughed ghoulishly, and hung up.

Well, he saw it. He also was reminded, soon after he arrived, of my wedding night, when my new father-in-law had taken me aside and warned me that his daughter was not a drinking woman but if I ever were constrained to serve her a cocktail, the only thing she'd drink was an Orange Blossom. And he gave me the recipe—Sauterne, white grape juice (which you could get at a little import shop on 54th Street), a dash of lemon juice, and highly-refined sugar. To make the drink the way my father-in-law said it ought to be made would have cost more than I made in a month, and would have had to be served in a diamond-studded goblet.

That night at May's place we drank the battery juice she sold us—and which I suspect she made in the trough out back—at a cost of five dollars a pint. Just the aroma was enough to set your fillings to rattling. For glasses, we used the half-inch-thick scarred mug that came with the room, passing it back and forth among us; we mixed the concoction with warm, brackish water from the "shower." For sociability we sat down, the three of us side by side, on the lower cot, bent over almost double because, if we straightened up, we'd have banged our noggins against the iron spring of the upper cot.

It was a real nice evening.

Later that night, my wife was to demonstrate to me the wisdom of



"Next?"

wearing high-heeled shoes. In the first place, these accoutrements kept one sufficiently above the dirty floor, and their second use came in being simply dandy for squashing the roaches and other visitors which insisted on sharing our modest quarters with us. You grab the slipper by the toe, and swish!

I GUESS, though, that, despite Klem's Kabins and May's Courts, the nadir in so far as my wife is concerned was reached one night in western Kansas, in an establishment known as Harry's.

Actually, Harry's wasn't bad, if looked at from a physical standpoint. It had comfortable-looking cabins, neatly painted, and with whitewashed rocks outside to offer landscaping of a sort. The cabins were neat and seemingly clean, there were private baths in each cabin, and, all in all, it seemed to us a passable spot in which to pass one of the hottest nights of a normal, hottish summer in Kansas. The temperature stood at 109 when we checked in at seven o'clock.

Harry's was run by a pleasant, nice old lady known as Mrs. Lane. Harry? Well, she didn't rightly know whatever had become of him; she and her husband simply had bought the place and never got around to changing the name. Then her husband had died some years previous ("I don't rightly know," she said, when I asked her what had caused her husband's death), and she'd run the place ever since. She hoped we'd be very comfortable.

And we probably would have been; but you know Kansas in August. When we went to bed at 11:30, it was so hot and sticky you couldn't lay anything down without using two hands, one to put the object down, the other to pry it loose from your sweaty grip. We sat around in the dark in our underwear, gasping for breath and waving at each other with a cardboard fan that advertised the Phelps Feed Company, distributors of Full-A-Vim chicken feed; it was part of the furnishings supplied by Mrs. Lane.

Once we'd turned out the light and had tossed and turned for an hour or so, I heard my wife rustling around, and concluded she was tossing off her nightgown. I'd thrown off my shorts a good half-hour earlier.

So there we lay on our respective twin beds, stark naked, panting, miserable and moist. The next morning we agreed that neither of us had slept a wink.

It was when we were checking out around nine next day that Mrs. Lane, kindly and pleasant-faced, smiled at us sweetly and said she hoped "we didn't disturb you last night."

We said no, she hadn't disturbed us, and just when did she mean?

"Well, my land," she said, "a body hates to admit there are such goings-on in his own home town. But, seems like the State Police have been watching that place in the back there for quite a spell, and last night they decided to pull a raid on it. And, so's there'd be no tipping those folks off, they asked me if they could sneak through your cottage, go out the back way, and take them by surprise."

I could feel my face getting hotter and hotter as I avoided my wife's gaze.

And?  
"Well, my land," Mrs. Lane burbled merrily on, "I peeped in, and you folks was sleepin' just as snug as babes—never even batted an eye when I flashed the light on you. So I knew you wouldn't mind when Sergeant Collins and a few of his men come in through your room, specially as they was awful careful to step quietlike."

"Raid was a success, too—caught them two hussies back there carryin' on just as brazen as you can imagine. Well, thanks for stoppin', folks, and hurry back!"

We were well into Missouri when my wife, tittering happily by this time, wondered out loud if Sergeant Collins had made a note of the strawberry birthmark on her left hip, and if he even then was thumbing through his flyers from the FBI to see if maybe we might be wanted somewhere for a safe-cracking job. . . .

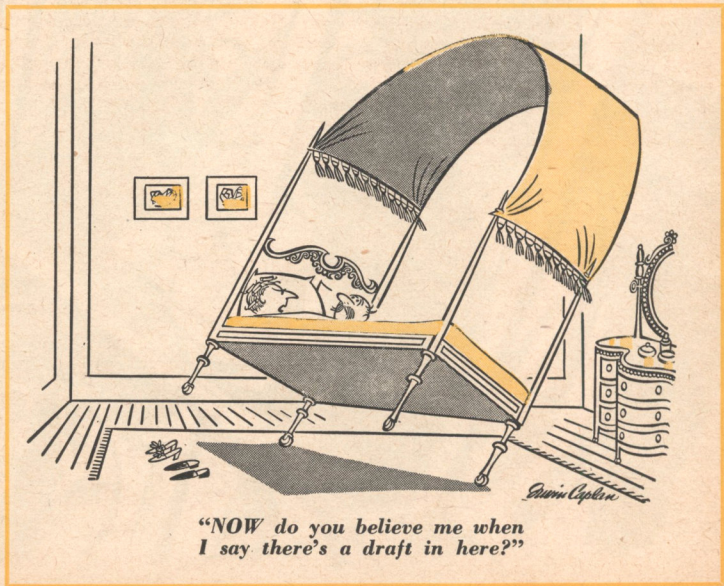
Despite all these misadventures, however—and you have to admit they make wonderful conversation topics when you get back home—we are confirmed motel folks. We stay at hotels now only when necessary, or when I'm off on a business trip where a motel,

on the outskirts of town, would be unhandy. We also prefer hotels in the larger cities, especially when we want to feel rich and profligate, our favorite in this latter category being the Beverly Hills Hotel, in California, where it seems to us innkeeping has been elevated to one of the fine arts.

When you're touring by car, though, you simply can't beat a motel. You check in, pay your bill immediately, and you can leave when you're darned good and ready, without having to wait while a bellhop comes to your room for your bags, while the management figures out your bill, while the garage brings your car around from whatever back alley they keep it in (at a minimum of a dollar extra a night); and you don't have to start the day by fighting your way out of town through the dense traffic of an unfamiliar city.

As I say, it's pretty nice. And it could be a blamed sight nicer if all the motels were run the way a few of the topnotchers are around the country. If the Klems and the Mays and the Harrys could somehow be taken on a trip to the Sea Shell, and the Wagon Wheel, and the Capitol—with maybe a night or so at the Beverly Hills—there could come a day when everyone in the land would take to the highways when vacation-time comes, and they could be sure of never having to cuddle up for the evening with a snake.

Not, mind you, that I'm against snakes. It just occurs to me, on the spur of the moment this way, that there are pleasanter individuals with whom to sleep.







# *LIFE* *in* *Twelve* *Minutes*

The jury didn't even leave the box. He was guilty, they said, and the whole trial had taken exactly twelve minutes! Twelve minutes in which to send Murdock to jail for life, for a crime he never committed. For a crime nobody committed.

By LUIS KUTNER and W. T. BRANNON

**P**ETER JUSTICE OPENED THE DOOR and faced the warden's male secretary, Selwyn, a trusty with a pink skin and a slightly effeminate manner. "They phoned you were on the way up, Mr. Justice," the secretary said. "The warden will see you in a moment," he added, in a voice that indicated he didn't approve.

Justice looked at his watch, shooting his cuff in a noticeable gesture. "The appointment was for four-twenty. It is exactly that time."

The secretary flushed. "All right, I'll buzz him." He tried to force a smile. "I know he'll be glad to see you again."

Justice grinned crookedly. "And I know he won't, but it's something we both must face."

The secretary nodded and pressed a buzzer. They could hear Warden Massey's rasping voice: "Yes, Selwyn?"

"Mr. Justice is here, sir. He has an appointment with you." Selwyn's voice raced on, to cut off anything the warden might say: "Has an appointment with you at four-twenty, sir."

There was a slight pause, the space of a breath. Then the warden said, "Of course. Show him in."

Warden Massey was waiting before his ornate desk. He was a tall, barrel-chested man with a flushed, smiling face under a shock of platinum-colored hair. At his left stood the powerful mastiff that accompanied him wherever he went about the prison. The dog, making no pretense, bared his teeth and glared at Justice with a low, deep-throated rumble.

B.F.

Massey stroked the dog's head and the growling ceased; then he smiled and put out his hand. Justice gripped it. The warden withdrew his hand, pulling it across his trousers leg as if he were wiping away germs.

For a moment, the two men stood facing each other. Justice was powerfully built, with broad shoulders and the figure of an athlete. His black hair, luxuriant and wavy, was matched by a hairline mustache. His voice was a pleasing baritone.

As the secretary withdrew, Massey went around his desk and, seating himself, clipped the end off an expensive cigar with a small gold knife on a gold chain. He nodded toward a chair at the side of his desk, and Justice sat down. The desk was polished and glass-topped.

"All right, Justice," Massey said. "What is it this time?"

"You have a prisoner named James Murdock."

"We have 4,367 prisoners, Justice," Massey responded curtly. "James Murdock may be one of them."

"I want to see him."

"Why?"

"Because I'm a lawyer. I represent him."

Massey pressed the intercom buzzer and Selwyn slithered into the office. "Yes, sir?"

"See if we have a prisoner named James Murdock. If so, bring me his dossier."

"Yes, sir." The secretary backed out, bowing and smirking.

When he had gone, Massey said: "Now, suppose you tell me what you really want, Justice. You couldn't possibly have any real interest in Murdock. He's a nobody, a number. He means nothing to you."

"He's a human being, Tom," Justice said amiably. "I have reason to believe he was unjustly imprisoned. If he was, I intend to fight for his release."

"So it's another of those phony habeas-corpus things."

"I never deal with phonies, Tom," Justice said, his voice cutting across the desk, "except when I am forced to."

Massey flushed. Before he could reply, however, the door opened and Selwyn came in. Treading softly, almost on tiptoe, the secretary walked to Massey's desk and laid a thick folder on it.

"Thank you, Selwyn," the warden said. "That's all."

Selwyn hung back. "He's a bad one, sir. He's a troublemaker."

The warden glared at him and he scampered out quickly.

Massey opened the folder, extracted a thick sheaf of papers. He glanced through them hurriedly.

"You certainly picked a good one this time, Justice," he said, still holding the papers. "Murdock is a lifer. He's in for criminal assault. He's been here ten years and he's caused a hell of a lot of trouble."

"Which means you've had him in the hole most of the time?"

"If you mean solitary confinement, yes. This man is constantly violating prison rules. We must have discipline. He is no better than any other inmate."

"Except," Justice said softly, "that he may be innocent."

"All right, you'll see." Massey spoke into the intercom, gave an order. "You know, of course, that I could refuse to let you see him."

"On what grounds?"

"There are plenty of ways. A man who deals in technicalities as much as you do should know that."

"They're all temporary, Tom," Justice said quietly.

"I'm not so sure of that. Earl Thompson was State's Attorney when Murdock was convicted. He's now Attorney General and he'll soon be Governor. He might not like you meddling in a case that he prosecuted."

"He'll have plenty of opportunity to oppose me if I take the case," Justice replied. "In fact, I may force him to defend himself."

"So that's it!" Massey exclaimed. "Politics! You're opposing Thompson and you want to smear him in the middle of his campaign for Governor."

"If he was wrong, I'll smear him. I have no interest in politics, as such. But I have no use for corruption and I'll expose it wherever I can. Now, do I see Murdock?"

"I don't know." Massey patted his dog. "It sounds like a trick—a trick to smear Thompson."

"How do you suppose he would like it," Justice asked softly, "if I told the papers you refused to let me see Murdock because you were afraid I might expose some corruption in Thompson's past?"

Massey didn't answer. His eyes half closed, he stroked the dog with one hand, pressed the buzzer with the other.

## Chapter Two

JUSTICE WAS ALONE in a small gray room—a visitors' room. At one end there was a barred window that overlooked the prison yard. The window was closed and rain slid down the panes. There was a bare table in the exact center of the room, with chairs on each side. Justice breathed deeply, feeling the oppressive heat of the place; the small fan that whirred on

the end of the table merely stirred the murky air.

The lawyer began searching the room. There were no pictures on the walls, no other furnishings of any kind. He looked under the table and the chairs, behind the radiator, and along the window frame. Then he noticed that there were two outlets into which the fan was plugged.

He pulled the cords out and the fan stopped. He tried switching them and the fan wouldn't work. That was it—the bug was in the fan. He left the plugs reversed and hung his hat over the fan. Then he sat down at the table.

A door across from him opened. Two men stood there—one was a guard. The other was Murdock.

Justice knew his age—he was 35. But Justice shivered, feeling the hairs standing up along the nape of his neck. Murdock was a *hundred* years old, he was a *thousand*; the look in his dark, distended eyes said that he had lived a bitter year every hour during the last ten years. The right side of his mouth was pulled into a sneer, and tight, sharp little lines spread from his taut-held lips almost to his thin squared chin.

Once Murdock might have been handsome, but now there was only bitterness left. His hair was thick over his high, straight forehead, but it was streaked with gray along the temples.

THE guard withdrew, but Justice could see that he was watching intently through a glass slot in the door. Justice wrote rapidly on a slip of paper, then stood up and put out his hand. Murdock just looked at it for a moment, then lifted his bitter eyes to Justice's face.

"I thought you were expecting me," Justice said.

Murdock continued to stare. "No." "My name is Justice—Peter Justice."

"So?"

"I'm an attorney. I've come to help you."

Murdock dropped into the chair. An expression of serene resignation settled on his face, softening but not wiping out the lines of bitterness. He said nothing.

Justice leaned his weight on his hands and stared across the table. "I didn't *want* to come here, Murdock. I didn't ask for it. I came without promising anything. But now I'm here. This is between us. I haven't time to waste; I'm busy."

"All right. Go back where you came from."

"If you've anything to say to me, you'd better say it!" Then the comic aspect of the situation struck Justice, and he sat down. For a moment, still grinning, he sat back on two legs of the chair and studied Murdock.

The he leaned forward and slid the paper along the table in front of Murdock. The prisoner glanced down at ..., a flicker of hope brightening his eyes for a moment as he read:

*Be careful what you say. The place is bugged. And the guard at the door is a lip-reader.*

"I knew that, lawyer," he said, his lips hardly moving.

"Do you know a woman named Jane Shaw?"

Murdock's expression didn't change. He shook his head; his bitter eyes told Justice he didn't even care who she was.

"She tried to hire me to see you. She said you had been framed. She wanted me to try to get you released."

JUSTICE thought he detected that glimmer of hope again. But it died quickly, if it had ever been there. "Let's get this straight, lawyer," Murdock said in a weary, matter-of-fact voice. "Maybe we can *both* save ourselves a lot of time. I've seen free lawyers before—several of them. They talked to me and I spilled my guts—and then I was thrown in the hole. I'm tired of lawyers!"

"Maybe I shouldn't bother," Justice said patiently. "But I'm this far and I intend to see it through. Did you ever hear of me?"

"Maybe I have."

"Then you must know my rule for taking a case. I've got to like it and believe in it. No amount of money can hire me if I don't believe in it. I haven't taken your case yet, and I may not."

"The other free lawyers had a good line, too," Murdock replied.

Justice looked at his watch. "I was given twenty minutes to talk to you—twenty minutes to make my decision."

"It took only twelve before," Murdock said.

Justice sat forward in his chair, feeling the tension and bitterness in the other man's voice. Outwardly, he was calm. He lifted an eyebrow.

"Twelve minutes?" he repeated.

"The trial, the frameup. In twelve minutes, they framed me and sent me here for life."

"Suppose we start at the beginning," Justice said. "Why were you arrested?"

"Nobody told me. I asked 'em and they wouldn't tell me. They just threw me in the can."

"How long did they keep you?"

"All night. The next day, they took me to the hospital to see this woman. I'd never seen her and she'd never seen me."

"What happened then?"

"They took me back to jail. They kept me for two weeks. Then they

took me to see the woman again. She still said she had never seen me."

"Didn't you have a lawyer?"

"Sure, I did. A free one."

"What did he do?"

"Nothing. He didn't open his mouth."

"Did you talk to him?"

"I tried to, but he wouldn't listen. So they put me back in the jug until the trial."

"Was the lawyer there then?"

"Sure, he was. But he might as well have stayed home."

"What happened at the trial?"

"A man read a paper. It said I was charged with assaulting this woman. Her name was Jennie Platt and she was the same one I had seen in the hospital."

"Was she in court?"

"Yes. The prosecutor asked her if the man who assaulted her was in the room. She said 'yes' and stood up and pointed at me. I can still hear her voice."

"Exactly what did she say?" Justice asked.

"She said, 'It's that fellow over there.'"

"Did you deny it?"

"I tried to—God knows I tried to. I stood up and I was going to face her, but my lawyer pulled me back in my seat. He said, 'Don't be a fool. They'll hang you.'"

"Did he put you on the witness stand?"

"He didn't do *anything*. He just sat there and listened when the judge gave the case to the jury. They didn't even leave the room; they found me guilty—and the judge sentenced me to life. For criminal assault—for assaulting a woman I had never seen until that day in the hospital!"

"Didn't you make any effort to refute the charge?"

The corners of Murdock's mouth pulled down in a bitter smile. "What could I do? I stood there and I looked around. My boss was there; he believed them. And the girl I loved—she was there. And even she—she wasn't sure. My God! I stood there staring at that woman and I began to think maybe I was nuts."

"Maybe she was right, maybe I was crazy. Everyone believed her. They didn't even let me testify. Maybe, for a moment, seeing my boss and my girl and that woman, I was mixed up inside. But I'm not mixed up now. *I know*. I'm innocent. I'm as innocent as you."

Justice said nothing as Murdock buried his face in his hands in a vain effort to blot out the memory. "I'm as innocent as any man who walks and breathes and works outside these walls," he went on. "But who cares? Who gives a damn? I'll tell you who cares: I do! *I still care!*"

He got up and began to prowling the room, walking in animal circles on his side of the table. Casually, Justice extracted his cigarette. "Smoke?" he asked, extending the pack.

Murdock shook his head. "Hell, no! A smoke? What for? Next you'll be telling me that a thing like this can't happen in this country. You'll be telling me that I'm lying, that there's more to it, that I'm guilty, that I've gone stir-crazy."

Murdock's voice rose as he leaned over the table and looked into Justice's eyes. "Go on. Say it. People can't be railroaded to prison for life when they're innocent, can they, Mr. Justice?"

Justice tried to smile. "The thought did occur to me, Murdock. But I won't say it. I promise."

Murdock sat down again and looked at him, the old distrust obviously returning. "But you don't believe me, do you?"

"I haven't decided. Put yourself in my place, Murdock. How would it sound to you? It would sound fantastic. I want to believe you. And if you're telling the truth, I want to help you."

Murdock's shoulders had slumped. "You're not the first one. I've talked to other lawyers who were going to help me. You'll leave here and I'll never see you again. The warden will throw me in the hole and I'll learn another lesson."

The guard opened the door. He rasped, "Time's up!"

Justice stood up. He looked at the heavy-jowled face of the guard, at the rain slowly melting and running like colorless wax down the panes of the windows. Then his eyes moved back to the hopeless, lost face of Jim Murdock, lifer. Murdock, a number without personality—no past, no future—just a number.

Murdock had gotten up when the guard called. Now he stood for a moment, watching Justice.

"I can't promise you anything, Murdock," the lawyer said. "It wouldn't be fair to you. I'll look into it; but I don't want you counting on anything."

"I won't," Murdock said. "Every morning I get up and I pray and I say to myself, *I do not belong in here*. I know if I say it often enough, maybe I can get a pipeline to the Head Man, up there. Maybe you're the pipeline. Maybe you're not."

He turned and shuffled off toward the waiting guard.

### Chapter Three

AS JUSTICE HURRIED ACROSS the sidewalk from the prison exit, his shoulders were hunched against the sudden-

ly-increased downpour. His driver, Monk, saw him coming and leaned across the seat, throwing open the rear door. Justice ignored it and got into the front seat. Turning, he slammed the rear door shut. "Okay, Monk," he said. "Let's get the hell out of here."

"A pleasure, boss," Monk said. "I never did like the joint."

Monk drove silently for about five miles along the rain-drenched highway. He drove intently, his husky six-foot frame crouched over the wheel. He gripped it with both large fists. His neck was thick and it strained his collar. His bristly black hair was close-cropped and his face bore the marks of an earlier career as a wrestler. His large nose had been slightly flattened, and he had a cauliflower ear.

When it appeared that Justice was going to ride all the way back to Chicago without speaking, Monk said, without taking his small dark eyes from the road: "Why not, boss?"

"Phony."

"No foolin'?" Monk shook his head. He continued to watch the road. He could hear the swish of the tires on the wet pavement. "Some punk trying to waste our time, huh?"

"No," Justice said thoughtfully. "I'll say that for him. He didn't want to waste my time." He chuckled briefly. "Indeed, he gave me the impression that I was wasting his."

"Stir-crazy, huh?"

"Probably. Murdock's been in prison for ten years. I think he's had a bad dream. Thinks he was unjustly convicted. Or maybe he has a persecution complex. In there, he's had nothing to do but contemplate his imprisonment. He says he's innocent, that he was framed."

"But he can't prove it."

"No. In fact, he says it took them only twelve minutes to accomplish the frame."

MONK laughed. "Twelve minutes. And he wasn't guilty? I guess the judge hated him, the jury hated him, and all the time he was innocent."

"That's what he claims, Monk. So far, there isn't any evidence to support it. Of course, it *could* be true."

"You're not going to fall for that old hearts-and-flowers routine, are you, boss?"

"That's just it, Monk. There wasn't any routine."

"Well, you know every con in there says he's been framed."

"That's right, Monk. And how many times have I proved that they have been framed?"

"A few hundred." Monk was suddenly silent. "Remember, I was one who yelled it was a bum rap, too."

"And we got you out."

Justice smiled. He knew Monk was just putting him to the test. This was Monk's way of challenging him to a decision.

"What do you think I should do, Monk?"

"Any chance he's telling the truth?" Monk countered.

"How logical does it sound to you?" Monk was silent a long time. "It ain't fair to ask me, boss. I was in that hole on a bum rap and I'm prejudiced."

"That was different," Justice said. "I found out you were just a poor guy who had got in somebody's way."

Monk turned his head a little. "But it ain't like that with this Murdock?"

"No. There's too much about it that I can't believe."

Monk was silent a few moments. "You haven't forgot you have a date for dinner with Miss Ray, have you, boss?"

Justice grinned. "How could I forget?" He settled back and reflected pleasantly on his association with Helen Ray. She had been one of the few girls in the class of law students to whom he lectured once a month in an Eastern university, and she had waited after the lectures to talk to him. They had become good friends and after she had taken her degree, he had invited her to come into his office.

That was three years ago. She had since become his chief assistant, taking much of the burden of his corporation clients. She seldom approved of his excursions into criminal practice to help those who had failed to find justice in the courts. She had urged him not to enter into the Murdock case.

He saw Murdock now as he had stood—a defiant and lonely man in a small bare room on the second floor of the prison administration building. He shook his head. Helen Ray was right. Justice was a corporation lawyer. Whatever fame he had, whatever money he'd accumulated, had certainly come from that secure and profitable practice.

"Damn it," he said aloud. "I have every sympathy for the innocent and the oppressed. But, you know, Monk, I haven't the time to waste on phonies. And I never heard of a case that sounded phonier than Murdock's being sentenced to life imprisonment in twelve minutes. But if he *were* innocent—"

"That's right, boss," Monk interjected. "Things like that can't happen."

"That's what Murdock said," Justice murmured. "Well, I've got to get this whole business out of mind. I shouldn't have come running up here."

Illustrated by BILL FLEMING

There's something I want you to do for me, Monk, as soon as we get back to the office."

"Sure, boss."

"Remember Jane Shaw?"

"The woman that begged you to come up here?"

"Yes, Murdock said he'd never heard of her."

"Boss, that *can't* be! She claims she was Murdock's sweetheart. She told me so herself!"

"Umm. Murdock could be bitter and trying to keep her out of this thing. Maybe she *is* the girl he loved; maybe he's trying to kill her hope. Probably knows he's going to die in Stateville. Just the same, he said he didn't know her. I want to talk to her again. Then I'm dropping the whole thing."

"She left her phone number with me," Monk said.

"Get in touch with her. Tell her I want to see her as soon as possible. I don't like people to send me on wild-goose chases on rainy days."

It was past seven when Justice and Monk stepped out of the elevator on the sixth floor of the Fidelity Building. All the lights were burning in the suite where Justice and his associates had their offices. Monk entered the reception-room and stood there, tense, looking about. Obviously he had expected to find the place in darkness.

Helen Ray rose from one of the more comfortable chairs in a corner of the room. She yawned and dropped the magazine she'd been holding.

"It's about time!" she said. There was no doubt about the disapproval in her brown eyes.

Monk nodded to her and went through the law library to a door marked, PETER JUSTICE, PRIVATE.

Helen merely glanced at him and turned again to Justice, who was removing his coat. "Had enough of playing cops and robbers for today?" she inquired.

"You're beautiful when your eyes snap like that," Justice said, grinning. "You're really a remarkable young woman. As just a woman, you draw stolen glances from dignified men. Others stare frankly. As a lawyer, you're exceptional. You're—"

"Look, Peter," Helen said, ignoring this. "I'm going to be very reasonable about this: In some ways, I find you're still a little boy. The last child-psychology book I read said always to reason with little boys."

Justice grinned at her. "You're wonderful."

"Peter, there is *nothing* you couldn't do if you put your mind to it. You have a fine reputation as a corporation lawyer. It makes me proud to be associated with you—"

"Associated with me! Helen, you make me sound a hundred years old and as sexless as a water-cooler."

"You aren't," she assured him. "Oh, I realize that if you were a hundred, and a water-cooler, I wouldn't be here trying to reason with you. You're really quite charming and exciting. I want to go on being proud of you, Peter."

"And why can't you?" he teased.

"I don't like the idea of other attorneys smiling and whispering every time you dash off to defend some gangster, some hoodlum, in some shoddy criminal court. That's not for you, Peter. You have your career. It could be a wonderful thing if you'd put people like this—this Murdock out of your mind, and—"

"Presto chango! Just like that—Murdock is out of my mind. Are you happy?"

She'd opened her mouth to go on talking. For a moment she stared at him, unable to believe that he was agreeing with her. She said lamely: "After you left today, I read everything I could find on James Murdock. He is an unsavory character who is just where he deserves to be."

"I agree with you," Justice said blandly.

"Do you really mean it, Peter?"

"Certainly. Right now, Monk is in the office calling Jane Shaw to make an appointment for me to see her tomorrow so I can tell her I'm not interested in the James Murdock case.

"I'm glad, Peter." She came slowly to him and caressed the lapel of his coat. "This isn't for you! You're no ambulance-chasing shyster."

"No. I'm Peter Justice, about to take his girl friend out and buy her a steak. We're celebrating Justice's return to corporation practice."

"A temporary thing, no doubt," Helen said.

"Probably. But you'll have to resign yourself to that, Helen. . . . I can't help seeing injustice. I can't help hating it and I can't help fighting it. What you need is a settled mature-minded man—"

"What I need is *you*. But not you running after cases like this Murdock thing."

Justice put his arm around her shoulder in an affectionate embrace. Then he heard Monk's cough.

"Got hold of Shaw, boss. She'll be here at ten in the morning."

"All right." Justice pulled Helen's hand through the crook of his arm.

"Let's go eat. I always get hungry when I don't take a case. Probably a conditioning from the days when I couldn't get a case and stayed hungry."

As they descended in the elevator to the street floor, Justice's mind was on Murdock. It was something he couldn't help; he knew that the bitter, anguished little man walked beside them as they moved toward the restaurant. All three were pretending as they talked casually—they were all thinking of the same thing: a man named Murdock, sitting lonely and disillusioned in a Stateville cell.

## Chapter Four

IN EIGHTEEN YEARS, Peter Justice had built up a fabulous practice in corporation law. Now, as Helen Ray often reminded him, the young attorney seemed to have lost interest in corporation practice and to have turned to unsavory people with unsavory problems, and, more often than not, with flat wallets. Sometimes, they even borrowed money from him.

Helen disliked in particular the stream of people who came along the corridor and through the double doors marked: PETER JUSTICE. Once the word had spread that Justice had successfully defended dozens of alleged criminals, frightened characters began clamoring for his services.

They strode or slunk into the mirror-paneled reception-room. Here the pretty switchboard girl sorted them and routed them through to the small office where Monk Saunders stood between them and the boss. Monk Saunders! Helen knew that Monk never stood between anyone in trouble and an audience with the boss. She tried to reason with Justice about it. The day was crowded, every minute taken, and the influx of mobsters and felons certainly didn't help the routine.

"Monk knows his job," was Justice's usual retort when Helen objected. She had never known a man more pleased with every part of his organization. Every member, from the partners down to the typists, represented to him the very best in his field. It didn't matter where they had come from. Monk Saunders, for instance, had come direct from Stateville. Justice had got Monk out of prison, and then the man had been unable to find work.

"I'm going to hire him," Justice had told Helen.

"But he's a criminal! What can he do?"

"Maybe I'll send him out to beat people on the head just to keep his muscles firm," Justice replied. Then he grinned at her. "I'm only kidding. I'll start him as a handyman."

There had been a long period of menial labor for Monk; then he began to drive for Justice. To keep him

## A CAREER WAS BORN



The story on the front page of the frontier newspaper was sensational, even at a time and place where acts of violence were commonplace. It told of a man who lived with his wife and seven children in a remote cabin on a mountaintop some miles from the town. At least that had been the situation until the day before when the husband and father had gone berserk, murdered them all with an axe, scalped them, polished off the contents of his likker jug, saddled his horse and ridden into town on a dead run, the scalps tied to his saddle horn and streaming behind him in the breeze.

A vigilante committee, representing the incensed populace, set out to investigate. With their findings they descended upon the newspaper's editor; they were almost ready to do a bit of scalping themselves. The editor apologized for the young reporter who had written the yarn. He had an unfortunate habit, it seemed, of thinking up lively stories when actual news was dull. The practice would cease, as of then, he promised the irate vigilantes.

And when his troublesome reporter appeared the editor told him that if he wanted to write fiction to do so, but no more products of his imagination were to be turned in as news. The newspaper was the *Virginia City Enterprise*. The young newsman who accepted the challenge and started writing fiction was Mark Twain.

practicing the shorthand and typing he had learned in prison, Justice gave him some dictation every day and he transcribed it at night.

Finally, Justice said: "Monk, I'm going to make you my confidential secretary. You can handle all the correspondence on my criminal cases. Miss Ross can continue to do my briefs and corporation work."

At first, the idea astounded people. But Justice accepted it calmly. Monk acted as if it were perfectly normal. After a while, nobody questioned it.

It was the morning after Justice's visit to Stateville that the receptionist in the lawyer's front office looked up, startled, at a figure before her. It was almost as if the man had presented a calling-card with the word *Hoodlum* engraved on it. A swarthy, dark man, he was gaudily dressed in a gray pin-stripe suit with padded shoulders, flared lapels and cuffs that broke over narrow-toed brown shoes. His black hair was heavily oiled and slicked back from a short, slanted forehead.

"Your name?" the receptionist inquired.

"Nick Bonner. I come to see Justice. Tell him I'm here, will ya?"

"You have an appointment?"

"Naw. But he'll see me; you just tell him it's important for him to see me."

"I'll let you talk to his secretary." The receptionist stood up. "This way, please."

He followed her through the corridor and the law library to the door of Monk's office. She opened the door, motioned the visitor to go in, then withdrew.

Bonner stopped short, stared. Monk was crouched over a typewriter beside a littered desk. He didn't even look up.

"Hey," Bonner shouted. "Hey, you!"

Monk regarded Bonner suspiciously, without cordiality. "Yeah? Whadda ya want?"

"Are you Justice?"

"No, I'm his secretary."

"Well, I want to talk to Justice."

"What about?"

"That's between us."

Monk pushed back in his chair. "The boss is a busy guy. I can't let just anybody barge in. You gotta state your business."

"Look. I just give it to you—plain. I'm Bonner. Nick Bonner."

"So?"

"So you tell Justice I want to see him. I ain't got all day."

Slowly Monk stood up; he towered at least eight inches over the hoodlum. For a moment, he stood and looked disdainfully down at the caller. Finally he said: "Have a seat. I'll find out if Mr. Justice can see you."

Justice was leaning back with his feet on the desk when Monk entered. Monk could tell by the lawyer's expression that he was reading the comics—the woes of *Orphan Annie*, the trials of *Dick Tracy*. He looked over the top of the paper.

"Boss, there's a character outside to see you. Tough guy; says his name is Nick Bonner."

"Nick Bonner? Never heard of him. What does he want?"

"He won't tell. Tried to push his way in. Shall I give him the heave?"

"No. In a corporation-law office, Monk, we are perfect gentlemen. Tell Mr. Bonner I'll see him. In—shall we say—ten minutes?"

"I gotcha, boss." Monk grinned and returned to his own office.

Bonner was on his feet. "Well?"

"Mr. Justice will see you," Monk said, "in about ten minutes. Now, if you'll excuse me, I got work to do."

He sat down at the typewriter, opened his shorthand notebook and began transcribing; his big thick fingers danced over the keyboard.

"Jeez!" Bonner exclaimed, staring incredulously.

Monk finally looked up from the typewriter. The keys slowed down. He struck a period and the clatter died. He removed the sheet from the typewriter and looked at his watch.

"You can go in now," he said.

Bonner strode past Monk, his lips twisted in eloquent contempt. But there still was bewilderment in his eyes.

Justice, watching the hoodlum enter his office, could sense that the man was dangerous. Obviously human life, property and the rights of others were treated lightly by this man.

Monk closed the door. Bonner shrugged his coat up on his shoulders a little and looked at Justice. Justice nodded toward a chair. Bonner sat down and for a moment, neither spoke.

Leisurely, Justice reached for a silver cigar lighter on his desk, lifted it to his cigarette as the flame leaped up. Deliberately he replaced it, exhaled blue smoke and regarded the dark man across from him.

"Can I help you?" Justice inquired, puckering his lips and lifting his eyebrows in a gesture of petulance that he sometimes affected.

"Can I help you?" Bonner countered.

"Maybe we'd better start over," Justice said coldly, with a glance at his wristwatch. "Your name is Nick Bonner. Is that correct?"

"Right."

"It is, I presume, your right name?"

"Right again."

"And it's supposed to mean something to me?" Justice's voice grew colder with each question.

"Yes."

"Perhaps it's supposed to impress or frighten me?" He leaned forward. "It doesn't, Bonner. Your name means nothing to me. Who are you and what do you want?"

"All right. I've come to tell you it would be a good idea to lay off the Murdock case."

The Murdock case! Justice maintained a poker face, giving his visitor no inkling that he was surprised. "What do you know about the Murdock case? How do you know I'm interested in it at all?"

Bonner leaned forward now. "Don't worry—we know what's going on. And if you know what the score is, Justice, you'll lay off."

"I suppose you have some good reason why I should?"

"Yeah. A good reason. The boys don't like the idea. Murdock is where he oughta be. The boys don't like you foolin' around in something that ain't any of your business."

"I don't suppose you want to identify the 'boys,'"

"No, I don't suppose I do."

"And if I don't choose to lay off?"

Bonner's swarthy face hardened. He glared contemptuously. "I don't suppose you'd enjoy having your toenails torn out," he said in a rasping voice.

For a moment, Justice's expression didn't change. Then, slowly, he began to smile, and then to laugh, loudly and broadly. Then, "And that's the extent of your message?"

"That's it, lawyer."

THE laughter vanished. Justice's eyes were now as cold and deadly as his voice. "Now, Bonner, this is *my* message: Get the hell out of here or I'm going to throw you out." He stood up. His shoulders were thrust forward and his jaw was hard and square.

Bonner stared at the massive figure. An expression of astonishment flitted across his face. He got up slowly, without speaking again, and moved backward toward the door.

At that moment a side door opened and Helen Ray came hurriedly into the room. She didn't even glance at Nick Bonner.

"Peter," she burst out breathlessly, "what's happening? Who was that talking?"

She pointed to the intercom on Justice's desk. "I suppose you didn't know that was open?"

Justice stared at her innocently. "I must have kicked the switch when I put the lighter back on the desk," he said. "I can see I'll have to be more careful. But I'm sure Mr. Bonner wasn't making any threats—*were* you, Mr. Bonner?" He turned his innocent eyes now upon the retreating hoodlum.

Bonner didn't answer. He jerked open the door and disappeared through it. It slammed after him.

HELEN was still watching Justice's face. "I heard a name mentioned," she remarked. "Murdock. *M-u-r-d-o-c-k*. I thought you had no further interest in that matter. That's what you said last night."

"Last night it was true."  
"And now you've changed your mind?"

He was frowning. "I don't know. Why would anybody want to threaten me, Helen? Why?"

Helen said, seriously: "I fully expect you to be shot rather than threatened, if you insist on dealing with such characters."

"All right. Then I make my point. I have a visitor making comic-strip threats. And all because of a poor guy named Murdock. What would you do, Helen?"

She had no opportunity to answer. The main door opened and Monk dashed in. He was breathless.

"The hood!" he gasped. "Where is he, boss?"

"Mr. Bonner just left, Monk," Justice said. "Why?"

"Well, I went out to check on him, boss. I found out plenty. This Bonner's a tough cookie!"

Justice nodded. "He gave me that impression, Monk. He's very anxious that I do nothing for a man named Murdock: A man I hadn't intended doing anything for in the first place."

"But now," Helen said, flatly, "his plans are changed."

Justice grinned at her. "How can I let the boys down after they have gone to so much trouble to intimidate me?"

"Aren't you forgetting something? Murdock isn't innocent. The judge and jury thought him guilty; I think he's guilty; and he sounds guilty."

"Oh, no," Justice disputed. "Murdock is innocent."

"Why are you suddenly so sure of that?"

"Unmistakable signs," Justice replied. "Somebody wants to keep him in prison. Somebody is quite *anxious* to keep him there. It's so important to keep him locked up that a hoodlum was hired to attempt to frighten me."

"But why?"

"Because it's dangerous for Murdock to be freed. His being released might spoil somebody's plans."

"Whose?"

"I haven't the faintest notion."

The telephone shrilled. Justice strode across to his desk and picked it up. "Justice. . . . Yes. . . . Who?"

"This is Jane Shaw."

"I thought you were coming here this morning, Miss Shaw."

"I was," she said. "I know I promised, last night. But something has



At that moment, the door opened and Helen Ray entered. She didn't even glance at Nick Bonner. "Peter!" she said, "what's happening?" "It's nothing," Justice said. "I'm sure Mr. Bonner wasn't making any threats. *Were you, Mr. Bonner?*" Bonner jerked open the door and disappeared.

happened, Mr. Justice. I must talk to you—but I can't come there."

"Where are you?"

"I'm in a phone booth."

"Where can I meet you?"

"Do you know the Mark Twain?"

Justice turned his head. "You know the Mark Twain, Monk?"

"Sure, boss. On Division Street."

"Yes, Miss Shaw," Justice said into the phone. "Shall I meet you there?"

"As soon as you can," she said.

"Give me twenty minutes."

## Chapter Five

JANE SHAW WAS WAITING for them in a booth in the rear of the restaurant. She seemed surprised that Justice was not alone. He smiled at her and bowed. "Miss Shaw," he said, "my bodyguards: Monk Saunders and Helen Ray."

Jane Shaw nodded to them, but obviously her mind was not on the introductions. She was a slender woman of about 30, but appeared younger. She was wearing a smart black dress cut low at the throat and a wide-brimmed red hat that matched a short red jacket.

Her face was pallid and her eyes troubled. She waited only until they were seated, then leaned forward. "Did you go to Stateville to—see him?" she asked.

Justice nodded. "I saw Jim Murdock all right. And it has set off chain reactions. You seem to be the only interested person in Chicago who hasn't heard that I have been to Stateville and talked to Murdock."

She raised a questioning eyebrow.

"We been threatened," Monk said.

"That isn't too important," Justice said, watching the girl narrowly. "Except that I'd like to know why."

She shook her head. "I don't know."

"Did you tell anybody you had been to see me?"

"No. I'm interested only in seeing him released. I don't know how anyone could have found out about it."

Justice continued to stare at her. "Perhaps you're being watched?" he suggested.

"Why? Who am I? I'm a cashier in a restaurant, Mr. Justice; I've waited a long time to see the man I love freed from prison. Why would anyone want to watch me?"

He wagged his head. "Somebody doesn't want Murdock out."

"But *why*?" she cried. "He was framed and never should have been there at all."

"Why have you waited ten years?" The girl's pale face tightened.

Justice persisted: "He's been there ten years. You appear youthful and lovely, hardly the type of woman to

stand by that long, while the man she loves is in prison unjustly. You say Murdock was framed. He was just as innocent ten years ago as he is now. What I want to know is why you didn't do something about it before this."

Jane Shaw dampened her lips with the tip of her tongue. "I thought you were going to be my friend; I thought you were going to help me."

"Miss Shaw, I believe Jim Murdock is innocent. I'd like to help him—and you. But I must have truth as the basis of our dealings with each other. Can you appreciate that?"

She twisted her fingers in her napkin.

"I *couldn't* do anything," she replied. "I didn't have any money to hire a lawyer. And I was afraid—since Jim had been framed, why couldn't I be framed as well?" She paused. "Why wouldn't the men who had framed Jim strike at me if I tried to fight them? I *had* to get money, Mr. Justice. I had to wait. I had to save. Now I've got some money and that's why I've come to you."

Justice looked at Helen Ray. She nodded. That meant Jane Shaw had convinced her.

"Why do you think Murdock was framed?" Justice's voice was softer.

"I *know* he was," Jane said. "I was with him the night of the crime. He—well, he couldn't have done it."

"Go ahead."

"An elderly woman was attacked. Jim was arrested and indicted. The woman identified him and he was convicted."

"Didn't he make an effort to get a new trial?"

"Yes. But they turned him down every time. They said sweetly that he'd be eligible for parole in twenty years. Twenty years! They're *determined* to keep him there."

"Do you know of any reason why they want him there?"

She shook her head. "No."

"Whose influence is being used against him?"

"I don't know." Her voice rose. "I only know that it is being used."

"Why didn't you testify at the trial? Why didn't you tell where Jim was at the time of the crime?"

"They wouldn't let me. I— One man even warned me to keep my mouth shut if I knew what was good for me. Jim's boss was there—Jim was a bookkeeper for a drugstore—and he couldn't do anything either."

"How old were you at the time?"

"I was 20."

"So now you are 30. And you haven't married or been in love since then?"

"No."

"Why?" He watched her face closely. "Isn't it rather unusual for a

woman to hold an attachment that long?"

"Perhaps it is," she replied. "But it was a terrible thing to see Jim torn from me like that, without reason and without a chance. All I could think was that he was alone, except for me. If I deserted him, there was no one."

"His parents were dead?"

"Yes."

"How did you meet him?"

"At a dance, a few months before his trial. We began to go steady and then we were engaged. Jim's book-keeping salary was a good one. He bought a house and we were going to live in it after we were married. Then something happened; there was something on his mind, but he wouldn't tell me about it.

"Soon after that he was arrested and indicted. I went out to Weston and tried to find out what had happened. All they would tell me at the police station was that he had been caught when he had attacked a middle-aged spinster. He was allowed to see nobody and was held without bail. I asked what time it happened and they said at 11 o'clock. I *knew* then that Jim couldn't possibly be guilty. He hadn't left me in Chicago until 10:30! It would have taken him twenty minutes to get downtown on the street-car and nearly another hour to get to Weston on the El.

"But nobody would listen to me. The two cops who had arrested Jim came to see me. They warned me to stay away from him and to keep my mouth shut. A lawyer was assigned to defend Jim, but at the trial he offered no defense. The woman pointed Jim out and the jury convicted him without leaving the box."

JUSTICE nodded. It was a good story, it hung together and it had the ring of truth.

"That's pretty much what Murdock told me," Justice said.

"It's the truth," Jane Shaw whispered.

"I've changed my mind, Peter," Helen said. "I think you should take the case."

Justice seemed not to have heard. He continued to look thoughtfully at Jane Shaw. "Can you give me any reason why Murdock would say that he didn't know you?"

She stared at him. For a long moment, the silence was tense. "No," she replied finally. Her voice was hollow. "Not unless he meant what he told me once when I visited him. He told me to stay away from him, to forget him."

"But you are determined to help him?"

"I've got to!"

Justice nodded again, slowly.



"Did anybody ever tell you about my fees?"

"Peter!" Helen admonished.

"No," the girl replied. "But—well—I've saved some money. I can pay you."

"How much?"

"Five hundred dollars."

"That's not enough for cigarette money," said Justice. "Surely you don't think I can afford to work for such fees."

"Well, I've saved fifteen hundred altogether," she admitted. "I'll give you all of it if you'll only take the case."

Justice shrugged, somewhat disdainfully. "I'll have to think it over." Helen kicked his shin hard with the point of her toe. His expression didn't change. "Where do you work, Miss Shaw?"

"At the Octagon Restaurant. I'm the day cashier."

"What is your salary?"

"It isn't much—\$27.50 a week."

"It certainly isn't much," he agreed. He leaned forward. "And you've saved fifteen hundred dollars out of that?"

"Yes."

"Remarkable." Justice drummed his fingers on the table top. "Why were you afraid to come to my office today, Miss Shaw?"

"It was a telephone call. It was silly in a way, yet it frightened me. It was a man and all he said was, 'Whatever you think you're doing, baby, forget it.' I remembered the way I'd been threatened at the time of Jim's trial, and I decided I'd better meet you secretly."

"All right. You're to quit being afraid, Miss Shaw. From the moment you brought this to my office, it's been in the open. Nothing is going to happen to you."

She thanked him. "I must get back to work now. I hope you'll take the case. I hope you'll help—us."

HE said good-bye and left the crowded room. Justice waited until she went through the door. Then he moved to the front window and watched her until she was lost in the crowds.

Then he returned to the booth.

Helen Ray eyed him curiously. "If you didn't want the case, Peter, why did you press her about the fee?"

"I wanted to see her reaction. I'm convinced she'll pay a lot more to get him out. She's very anxious about it."

"Of course she is! But why do you think she can pay more?"

He smiled. "She can't. But whoever is paying the fifteen hundred can."

Monk and Helen stared at him.

Helen looked unhappy. "You think she isn't paying it herself?"

"I know she isn't," Justice said. "That baby isn't the kind to save money. But I'll bet she knows how to spend it. No, Helen. Somebody else is furnishing the dough."

"If that's so, why didn't she offer you a good fee to start?"

"She wanted to make it look good. She wanted me to think she was telling the truth."

"Wasn't she?"

"Sounded level to me, boss," Monk interposed.

"She wasn't. Oh, she probably knows all the facts about Murdock. But her story about waiting ten years for him and her reason for wanting to get him out are baloney. Before I do anything else, I'm going to find out the real reason." He ordered a round of drinks. "Maybe I'll find out when I learn who she really is."

"She ain't even Jane Shaw?" Monk asked.

"No. She's a phony." And Justice grinned. "Did you notice the third finger, left hand? She's been wearing a wedding band and an engagement ring. Jane Shaw was probably the name of Jim Murdock's girl friend, though."

"Even if the girl is a phony," Helen said, "she could check on that easily enough."

"I'm in," Justice replied with a broad grin. "This babe, who is working for somebody, wants Murdock out. Somebody else, with Nick Bonner on his payroll, wants Murdock to stay in. It ought to be a good case."

The waitress handed Justice the check, then continued to stand there. "Mr. Justice," she said, "I know about you. You handled a case for a friend of mine. Is that girl who left a client of yours?"

Justice nodded. "Do you know her?"

"Sure. She used to work for Steve Acropolis. She got fired for clouting."

"What's clouting?" Justice asked.

"Boss," Monk interposed, "ask me them things. What will people think? Clouting means the dame is stealing from the cash register. Has a check for a dollar, say, and rings up fifty cents." He glanced at the waitress. "Right?"

"That's right."

Justice paid the check and they left the restaurant.

"Where to, boss?" Monk asked.

"You know where Steve Acropolis' place is?"

"Sure. It's a joint on North Avenue."

"All right. Take us over there."

Steve Acropolis was a stout, balding man of indefinite age. He sat on a high stool behind the cigar counter. His restaurant had about a dozen tables and booths and a counter along the wall.

Acropolis smiled at them as they entered. But his smile vanished when he realized they were not there as customers.

"We're looking for a girl," Justice said. "She once worked for you."

"What kind of a girl? What was her name?"

"She is about 30," Helen said. "Dark-haired. Medium tall. Very pretty."

Acropolis gestured vaguely toward the tables and booths. "She don't work here."

"I know she doesn't," Justice said. "But she did. Jane Shaw. Do you know that name?"

Acropolis hunched his shoulders, gestured with both hands. "Never heard that name before. No girl by that name never worked here."

Monk took a hand. "Maybe this will help," he said: "They said she was canned for clouting. They said you gave her the bounce for dipping into the till."

ACROPOLIS nodded, a brief smile flickering across his dark features. "Oh, her! Yeah, I know that girl. She ain't worked for me for a long time."

Justice stood aside to let a line of customers get to the counter to pay their checks.

"What was this girl's name?" Justice asked, after the customers had paid and gone.

Acropolis looked at him blankly. "I don't know," he replied. "I'd have to look it up."

Justice waited, but Acropolis made no move. It was apparent that he didn't intend to look it up.

"And her name wasn't Jane Shaw?"

"Nah. I never heard that name."

"You fire a lot of girls, eh?"

"Good girls can always keep a job. It's a lot of bad girls that spoil everything. I don't have bad girls in here."

"And this one was a bad one, is that right?"

"She's stealing from a register, mister. What do you think?"

"I think she looked as if she wouldn't do it," Justice replied.

Acropolis nodded. "Yeah. That's the way she looked to me. At first, I don't believe it. But it's true—you could sure tell by checking the receipts and the money. She was no good."

"And you don't know where she has gone?"

Again Acropolis shook his head. "I think I hear later that she was hired by a man named Orville Norris." He laughed. "But I don't know why Orville Norris would hire a girl to work for him; he ain't even got a job himself! Just the same, that's what I heard. It don't make any difference to me, she was no good."



## STRANGE PROPHECY

TWICE, THE STRANGE PROPHECY proved true. The old Indian chief of the Micmac tribe said the white men would put three bridges across the harbor at Halifax, and that each time they would "fall like a dying breath."

The first span went up in 1884, and the Micmac predicted it would fall in a storm. It was swept away in a September, 1891, storm. The second bridge would vanish in silence, the Indian warned. One calm night in 1893 the second bridge quietly slipped from its moorings and drifted into Bedford Basin, several miles away.

The third bridge is being built now. To cost eight million dollars, it is to open in 1954. The builders are hoping against hope that this time the strange Indian will be wrong, for the Micmac said the third span would collapse with great loss of lives.

The Indian chief ruled a tribe at Tuft's Cove, near Halifax, about one hundred and fifty years ago, and his macabre prophecy stems from an affair between his wife and a British naval officer. Every day the officer and Indian woman went out in canoes from opposite sides of the harbor and met at a midway point. Suspicious of his wife's daily disappearance, the chief followed her one day. When he saw the lovers rendezvous he became enraged and scalped his wife. Then he cursed the union of the opposite shores, and predicted that attempts to join them permanently with bridges would fail.

Was it just coincidence that his prophecy twice came true? Perhaps. But there are many other inexplicably accurate prophecies on record. Sometimes the prophets have been famous, such as Nostradamus, Mother Shipton and Saint Odile. They foretold such cataclysmic events as world wars, atom bombs, and airplanes. Sometimes, like the Micmac chief, the prophets have been obscure men. But obscurity has made their predictions no less weird.

A Richmond, California, man for instance, telephoned police to say that a Santa Fe streamliner had just hit a truck. The truck-driver, he said, had been badly hurt.

Richmond police rushed to the specified crossing, but found no wreck. The train hadn't even come by. They were just about to dismiss the report as a prank when the train roared in. A truck tried to cross the tracks. There was a crash. The truck-driver suffered a crushed chest and brain injuries.

In Atlanta, Georgia, recently, the proprietor of a salvage company had a premonition that his plant would be burglarized. He armed himself with a shotgun and sat down to keep watch. Nothing happened, and he finally fell asleep. When he awoke, he found that burglars had paid him a visit. They had even taken his shotgun.

The strange fate of the Halifax bridges could be marked off to coincidence, but hearing such stories as these must make the bridge engineers wonder.

—Jerry Klein

"Who is Orville Norris? What does he do?"

"He hangs around," Acropolis answered. "I swear, mister, he don't do nothing else. He's got dough and he eats in here, regular. But he don't have any office. And like I said, I sure don't know why he hired that girl from here."

"You know where I could find Orville Norris?"

Now the bland man shook his head. "Maybe when he comes here to eat. Like I said, he eats here regular. But I ain't seen him today. No, he ain't been around all day. Now ain't that funny? Just on the day you're looking for him!"

### Chapter Six

OUTSIDE THE WESTON police station Peter Justice paused. It was a dirty stone building that seemed to be pressed between two new structures and the lights and fresh paint of the new façades on either side made the stationhouse seem even older and uglier. A paint-chipped green light burned above the door. Two elderly men sat on the steps, talking and puffing on cheap cigars as Justice went past them into the outer office.

Three patrolmen were sitting in chairs against the walls. They were talking with an elderly man who had the look of a cop. Justice glanced at him as he crossed to the desk sergeant. The old guy was probably retired. Very likely he knew nothing but being a cop and was lost in his new and unaccustomed freedom. There was nothing for him any more but to hang around the station where he'd once been a part of things.

The desk sergeant looked up. "I'd like to see the Captain," Justice said.

The sergeant nodded. "What's your name? What's your business with the Captain?"

"I'm Peter Justice, Chicago. I'd like to talk to the Captain about a police matter."

"What sort of police matter?"

"I want the records and data on an arrest."

"All right. Just a minute. I'll see if Captain Richards can see you now."

He slid off the high stool behind his desk and walked across the room to a door marked CAPTAIN, PRIVATE. The sergeant knocked on the door, then entered the office. Justice could sense that the patrolmen had stopped talking with the old-timer and were watching him.

The police captain came out of his office, followed by the desk sergeant. Richards was a stocky man, with a ruddy face and short gray hair that stood up like a military brush.

He came to the wicket beside the sergeant's desk.

"Yes, Mr. Justice," the captain said. "What is it?"

Justice looked at the police official. He had expected at least to be invited into the man's office.

"I'd like to talk with you for a few minutes," Justice said. He forced himself to keep his voice at a friendly pitch. He still wanted to be asked into the captain's office.

Richards just stared at him unblinkingly.

"All right," he said. "Go on."

Justice frowned. He could feel the eyes of every man in the room on him. The desk sergeant had slid back onto his stool, and now sat watching him and Richards.

"It's about Jim Murdock," Justice stated.

Captain Richards frowned. "Never heard the name."

"Never heard the name! Murdock is right now in Stateville; he was arrested in this station."

"How long ago, Mr. Justice?"

"Ten years ago. How long have you been in this station, Captain?"

"Sixteen years in August," the captain replied.

"Then you must have been here when Murdock was arrested."

The captain smiled. "I was here when a lot of men were arrested, Mr. Justice. Ten years! Why, Mr. Justice it might surprise you to learn how many men are arrested in only ten days! I can't be expected to remember the name of a man arrested here ten years ago!"

Justice gripped the wicket bars in his fingers. "I have an idea of the number of people arrested every day, Captain. But I assure you I didn't come out here to be given a lecture on the subject. Not enough men are arrested in this station for assaulting a woman, and are then sentenced to life imprisonment in the State Penitentiary, so that you couldn't remember their names."

THE captain continued smiling. "What was the name again?"

"Murdock. James Murdock. He was arrested in November. November 22nd, ten years ago. The charge was assault. He was held without bond. He was taken from this jail to criminal court, where he was kangarooed into a natural-life deal."

The captain shook his head. "I ought to remember a thing like that, all right. But I don't." He looked at the desk sergeant. "How about you, McHarg—do you remember the case?"

The sergeant shook his head. "Robbery. Hit and Run. Assault. Arson. All day long, Captain. I don't try to keep in mind anything that's ten years old."

"You should try," Justice said. "I can tell you both this: Ten years from now, I'll remember both of you. I'll remember your names and your faces when I make the effort to recall. And do you know why? Because of the way you're acting on this matter."

The captain's smile seeped from his ruddy face. "Now just a minute, Mr. Justice! You asked us a question. We answered you. We don't remember. Your attitude will get you nowhere."

"I demand to see the arrest record of James Murdock."

"I'm sorry. These records are kept in the basement and they are not open to the public."

"I don't mind walking down to the basement," Justice replied. "And I'm not the public. I am counsel for James Murdock." He pushed a business card through the wicket to the captain.

"Here, I'll make it official," he continued. "I *insist* that I be allowed to see the record of his arrest, here and now."

The captain was no longer smiling. When he smiled, he seemed a bland though arrogant man. But now he appeared dangerous. Plainly, he didn't like to be told anything at all.

He said at last, "I suppose we can arrange that. Would you like to come through that door to your left, Mr. Justice? I'll have our records man show you to the files."

JUSTICE nodded. He followed the captain through an exit and they went along a musty, airless corridor to a door marked RECORDS.

The captain did not speak. He thrust open the door and entered ahead of Justice.

A youthful-looking cop was half asleep with his feet up on his desk. His tie was loose and the collar of his shirt was unbuttoned. He sat up, smiling and blinking at his visitors.

"Henderson, this is Mr. Justice. He is a lawyer from Chicago. He is representing some man who was arrested here in November, ten years ago. He'd like to see the records of the arrest."

"Okay," Henderson said. He stood up, seeming glad to have something to do. He unlocked a door behind his desk. Justice glanced into the room beyond, where there were the files in huge bound volumes. He glanced at Captain Richards.

"This is the basement?" he said.

Richards did not smile. "I always tell people that," he replied. "Basements are usually enough to discourage most of 'em."

Henderson returned from the records vault with two large books in his arms. His hands were smeared with dust. He put the books on his

desk and brushed the dust from his shirt.

"Here are the arrest and disposition records," Henderson said. He glanced at the captain. "You wouldn't want the investigation records?"

Richards looked at Justice.

"Will these records be enough, Mr. Justice?"

"In a case like this, I'd say the investigation records would be most enlightening."

"You'll need an order from the Police Commissioner to see them," Richards said. Now his smile was smug. "These records are never made public."

Justice looked at him. "May I use your telephone?"

The captain nodded. Justice could see that Richards disliked him, and wanted to defeat him soundly in any way that he could. A thing like that was a challenge to Justice. And he admitted he felt no great warmth for the police captain.

DELIBERATELY Justice consulted a small black notebook that he took from his inside coat pocket. He found the unlisted telephone number he sought and dialed Long Distance. He gave the number to the operator and almost at once a man answered.

"B.R.?" Justice said. He put a grin into his voice. "Justice. . . I'm swell, thanks. How's with you? . . . Yes, I'd like to have lunch with you. . . Thursday? I will make it, whether I can or not; I look forward to hearing about your trip. Oh, by the way, B.R., you happen to know the Police Commissioner in Weston? Good. . . Look, I'd like an order from him. I want to see some hush-hush records in the Weston police station. . . Yes, that'll be all right; just have him call the captain here. You might have him ask for the Records extension." He glanced at the dial face. "It's Extension 8, B.R. And thanks. See you Thursday."

He replaced the receiver. He could feel the eyes of the captain on the back of his head, but he didn't turn around. He smiled at Henderson. "Shall we get started? It should be pretty easy. Let's take the arrest records first. November 22."

Henderson was thumbing through the age-cripsed pages. He lip-read as he worked: "August. September. October. November. Ah! November, 16-18-20-21. Hey! Look here, Captain. It goes from the twenty-first of November to the twenty-third. Why, this is crazy! Nobody ever kept records like this. That whole *day* is missing!"

Justice went around the desk. He searched both ways in the book. His voice was sardonic. "I'm not very astonished. Are you, Captain?"

"It could have happened," Richards said. "Ten years, Mr. Justice, is a long time."

"Nuts!" Justice snapped. "First, you never heard of James Murdock. And now the arrest records for November 22nd, the day you picked him up, are missing. Isn't that too much for chance?"

The captain shrugged. "I didn't promise anything. I said you could look at the records. You've looked."

The telephone interrupted.

"Why don't you answer it, Captain?" Justice said affably. "Maybe it's for you."

The captain reddened, picked up the phone. "Richards," he said curtly. "Yes, Commissioner. . . . Yes, he's here. . . . Yes, I refused to let him see them. . . . Well, he breezed in here and began making demands. . . . After all, sir, he's not even a resident of Weston. . . . All right, Commissioner, if you say so."

Richards listened until the caller had hung up, then flung the phone into its cradle. "Henderson, show him the investigation records. It's the Commissioner's orders."

"Yes, sir," Henderson replied. He added, "The old investigation records really are kept in the basement."

There were no records in the basement for November 22nd to November 30th. Justice went over the entire year carefully. The records for the period when Murdock had been in police custody had not been bound into the wrong part of the big loose leaf book. Obviously, they had been removed—if they had ever been in the book at all.

ANY doubt Justice had had about the Murdock case was gone now. The missing records pointed to the inescapable conclusion that Murdock was innocent, that he had been framed.

"Anywhere else you want to look?" Richards asked when they'd left the basement.

"No," Justice replied. "I'm sure I wouldn't find anything."

"I'm sorry we couldn't help you," Richards said.

"You may well be," Justice snapped and stalked out the front door.

He was almost across the sidewalk when he heard a hissing sound. "Hey, you, Mister!"

Monk had opened the door of the car for him. Justice stopped and turned. The old man he had noticed in the police station was standing in the doorway of the adjoining building, beckoning with a crooked finger.

Justice crossed to where he stood. Monk had slipped out of the front seat and stood watching them.

"You here to see about the Jimmy Murdock case?" he whispered. "Let's

go somewhere we can talk. I was on the force then; I remember all about it—like it happened yesterday!"

## Chapter Seven

JUSTICE SMILED at the retired cop. Fortunes of war, he told himself. How many times has success in investigations depended on breaks like this? An old man with nothing but time on his hands. A cop with a memory. No matter how little the old fellow knew, it would furnish some lead in untangling the case against Murdock.

"That's fine," Justice said. "Let's go where we can talk."

"Have your chauffeur drive you away. I'll meet you on the corner, three blocks down."

Justice agreed and got in beside Monk.

"We got company," Monk said, as they drove away.

Justice looked in the rearview mirror. Another car had pulled away from the curb and was keeping behind them.

"We'll have to ditch them," Justice said. "Probably some of Richards' boys."

Monk stepped on the gas and shot ahead. At the next corner, he turned left. He drove a block and turned right. He kept this up until the plainclothesmen were a block behind. Then he turned into an alley. At the end of the alley was a public garage.

"In here," Justice said.

Monk turned in, pulled up to the gas pump and told the attendant: "Fill it up."

Justice stood at a window and watched the unmarked police car pass through the alley. At the street intersection the driver and his companion looked both ways. Finally they emerged and started driving south.

"It's okay now, Monk," Justice said. "They've started toward Chicago. We can go back now."

He paid for the gasoline and got in. Monk backed out, went down the alley and drove to the intersection where the retired cop was waiting. The man got into the back seat quickly. "Maybe we better go somewhere we can get a drink," he said. "And not around here."

Justice nodded to Monk, who drove twelve blocks and parked in front of a tavern. Justice kept watch in the rearview mirror, but saw nothing of the tails.

"This looks all right," the old man said. "I'll walk in and set at a booth in the back. Then you fellows wander in."

Justice counted to twenty very slowly; then he and Monk went into the

tavern. The room was sparsely occupied and appeared shabby and dark. They saw the retired cop in a booth at the rear. Monk and Justice sat across the table from him.

"You might think I act pretty queer," the cop said when Justice had ordered beer for them. "But Weston is a funny town. If you get on the List in this town, you might as well cut your throat. You know how the police can be if they don't like you, Mr.—"

"Justice—Peter Justice. This is my assistant, Monk Saunders."

The ex-cop smiled. "Looks more like a bodyguard."

"Monk's muscle-bound." Justice grinned.

"My name's Charley Godfield," the old man said. "I was on the force here in Weston for thirty-two years. Just retired a few months back. You know what retirement is, don't you, Mr. Justice? It's gettin' your pay cut in half."

"And taking away your job," Justice agreed. "Leaving you nothing to do with yourself."

"It's like that with me," Godfield said. "When I heard you mention Jimmy Murdock in the station, I perked up. That Richards was lying through his teeth. How could he say he never knew Murdock? He was right there when it happened. We all were."

"Did you see Murdock?"

"I sure did. I could smell there was something funny going on that night. I went back to the cell-block and talked to him. This Murdock, a nice-looking young kid, was sitting on a cot. He looked dazed, like he didn't know where he was or what was happening to him. He looked up at me and I could see where they had hit him across the face. His face was bloody, but he wasn't paying any attention to that."

"Did you talk to him?"

"Yes. I went to the bars and said: 'What's the matter, kid? What they got you in for?' He shook his head.

"I don't know," he said. "They wouldn't tell me." He looked plenty sick."

"What did you do?"

"Mr. Justice, what could I do? I was a flatfoot, a harness bull, a nobody. I never got promoted. I didn't have a Chinaman to look out for me, so I had to watch my step. I couldn't stick my neck out for some scared kid that I had never seen before."

"Didn't you ask around the station? Didn't you try to find out?"

"Sure, I found out. He was charged with attacking a woman named Jennie Platt. It sure did stink. We were sick about it. Mr. Justice, a lot of cops are as honest as you are. But sometimes they get or-

ders they don't like, and they have to do things they don't like. That's how it was on the Murdock case."

"The records on Murdock are missing," Justice said.

Godfield was not astonished. "They ain't the first ones that were ever missing, any more than they'll be the last," he said.

"Is that all you know about Murdock?"

"Just about," the old cop said. "I asked questions. But I was told to shut up and forget it. Probably that's why I remember."

Justice ordered more beer. The old man's face beamed.

They drank in silence for a moment. "There's one other thing," Godfield said at last. "I got to thinking about that woman, Jennie Platt, and wondered if she was in the hospital. Later that night while I was in the prowl car, I stopped in and talked to the nurse in the Emergency Out Ward. Sometimes we'd have a drink together when I brought in an accident case to be patched up.

"She said yes, Jennie Platt was in the hospital. I didn't try to see her—had no reason to. I was satisfied that Murdock had attacked her. So I done like they told me. I forgot it." "And the nurse," Justice prompted. "Do you remember her name? Do you know where she is now?"

"She's retired now," the old cop said. "Her name is Hazel Stroud and she lives by herself up on Nevada Road. She's got a basement apartment in the rear." He gave the number. "She might not talk to you, though. She's gettin' on in years. Been sick a lot and don't like to have strangers around."

Justice dropped a twenty-dollar bill on the table. "Thanks, old-timer," he said. "You've been a big help."

Godfield looked at the twenty-dollar bill and smiled up at Justice. But there was something odd about the smile; it was rueful, the look of a man who has talked and now wishes he could recall his words.

Monk and Justice stood up. The old man continued sitting there, his fingers gripping his beer glass. Justice started to turn away.

Godfield leaned forward across the table. "Look, Mr. Justice," he said, "keep my name out of this. I might lose my pension. It ain't much but if I lose it, I'm sunk."

## Chapter Eight

AS MONK SEARCHED for the number on Nevada Road Justice had some misgivings. Was this a real address? Was Hazel Stroud a real person, or had Godfield, acting on orders, played him for a sucker?

"This must be it, boss," Monk said, pointing to a four-story tenement building.

Justice got out and walked down a long narrow gangway that was barely wide enough for one person. At the end of the passage was the entrance to a basement apartment. He went down the cracked cement steps and stopped in front of a door. He hunted for a name and a button for a doorbell, but found neither.

He pounded on the door, but there was no response, no sign of movement inside. He rapped several more times, without luck. He went up the steps, located a window that apparently opened into the basement apartment, and dropping to his knees pressed his face against the dirty glass.

The apartment was mostly below ground level. Only a few feet of the upper part were above the gangway. Justice peered through the soot-blackened pane. At first, he could see nothing; then as his eyes became accustomed to the dim light, he made out the huddled figure of a woman on a bed against a wall of the crowded room.

Justice tapped on the window glass with his ring.

"Hazel," he called, "Hazel Stroud!" She struggled up on the rumpled bed, peered at him through squinting eyes and shook her head. She motioned for him to go away. Obviously she didn't care who he was. She didn't want to talk to anybody.

He rapped again. With a sigh of resignation, the emaciated woman crawled out of the bed and padded over to the window. She stared up at the opening, making no effort to see who was there.

"What do you want?" she demanded.

"Are you Hazel Stroud?"

"Yes."

"I want to talk to you."

She shook her head. "I don't want to talk. I'm too sick."

"It's urgent."

"You might as well go away."

"I'm not going, Hazel. I want to come inside. I want to talk to you."

She started back toward the bed, and Justice rapped on the pane again.

She sighed and turned again to face the window. "All right," she said. "Come to the door. The sooner I talk to you, the quicker you'll go away."

She unlocked the door as Justice went down the steps. The odor in her tightly-closed room was of medicine and foul air. Justice sat down carefully on a scarred chair.

Hazel Stroud dragged herself back to the bed, toppled upon it and drew the blanket up around her frail body. She stared at him, but Justice realized

she wasn't really seeing him at all. The pupils of her eyes were constricted. He saw that she was doped.

She was very thin; her dry flesh seemed stretched across the prominent bones of her face. Her hands, picking at the front of her gown, were like talons.

He didn't hope to learn much here.

"Hazel," Justice said, "do you remember a woman named Jennie Platt?"

"No. Never heard of her."

"Do you know what I asked you?"

"Yes. Do I know somebody?"

"Do you know her? Try to think, Hazel. You attended her in the hospital a long time ago. She was assaulted. She was brought in before midnight. Her name was Jennie Platt. Can you remember, Hazel?"

"No. Go away. Leave me alone. I'm so tired. I can't remember; I don't want to."

"Hazel, an innocent man is in prison because of that crime. Now, won't you try hard to remember?"

"I can't. I never heard the name."

"Hazel, listen to me! It doesn't matter to you, maybe. You don't care any more. But there is a man in prison. He has spent ten years of his life there and he should never have been there at all. You can help me get him out, Hazel."

"I'm sick," she whimpered. "I can't talk—can't remember."

HE leaned forward. "Hazel, listen. Isn't there something I can do to help you? Do you want me to make you some coffee?"

She shuddered, shook her head. "No." She twisted around on the bed and pointed a bony finger. "The small bottle," she whispered. "There, on the left. Get it for me."

That much talking had left her breathless. She sank back on the pillow, gasping.

Justice found a spoon and took the bottle from the shelf. He began pouring the black liquid. She sat up and kept nodding until the spoon was brimming. She began to tremble all over as Justice brought the pungent medicine close to her colorless lips. She drained the spoon, fell back on the bed.

Again he sat on the chair, waiting. The minutes dragged by in the cluttered room.

She turned toward him again. Her taut face was beaded with sweat.

"You've come to the wrong place," she gasped and her mouth twisted. "Don't come to Weston, young man, asking about Jennie Platt."

"Why not, Hazel?"

"Because who would dare to talk about it? I was told to forget it. I'm not remembering now—not for you or for anybody else."

"Hazel, I need help. There is an innocent man whose chance at life depends on you. Won't you help?"  
"I'm too sick." She rolled over on the bed. "Why don't you ask the doctor?"

The effects of the medicine were wearing off. The black liquid was losing its hold on her. Justice saw he was losing her, too. He reached over and shook her arm.

"The doctor!" he shouted at her. "What was his name?"

She looked up. Her eyes begged him to release her. "Jamieson," she said. "Paul Jamieson."

"Where is he now?"  
"Don't know. Don't want to know. Can't tell you any more. Ask Jamieson."

Justice pulled the door shut and went up the stone steps.

**M**ONK returned from the drugstore and slid in under the wheel.

"He was listed four times," the big man said. "Paul Jamieson isn't only easy to find—he screams at you from that telephone-book. You can call him at Weston General Hospital. He's chief of staff there. You can get him at two numbers at his office. And he has a home in Weston Heights."

Justice took the slip on which Monk had written the numbers. "Looks as if Dr. Jamieson has come up in the world since the night he attended Jennie Platt."

"What do we do now, boss?"

"Let's try his office."

Dr. Jamieson's Weston office belonged in a world far removed from the squalid poverty of Hazel Stroud's room on Nevada Road. A strikingly pretty receptionist smiled at him. The appointments of the office were the last word in luxury, and the receptionist was the most expensive-looking item of all. Obviously, Jamieson had done well. The people reading magazines in the comfortable chairs about the room had the look of quiet but substantial wealth.

"Yes?" the girl said.

"My name is Peter Justice. I'd like to see Dr. Jamieson."

"Of course. You have an appointment, Mr. Justice?"

"No. It isn't a medical matter. I'm an attorney; I need only a few minutes, but it's urgent."

The receptionist glanced about the room. "I'm sorry, Mr. Justice. All these people have appointments. Every minute of Dr. Jamieson's time is taken. To see him without an appointment is simply impossible."

In the public telephone booth in the lobby, Justice dialed Dr. Jamieson's office number. The same receptionist answered.

"I'd like to talk to the doctor, please."

"Who's calling, please?"

"Peter Justice."

"One moment, Mr. Justice."

The next voice was tired and brusque. "Jamieson."

"Doctor, I'm Peter Justice. Attorney. My office is in Chicago and perhaps I'm unknown to you. But there's something I'd like to discuss with you. It's urgent."

"Why don't you write me a letter? I'm extremely busy."

"I know; I heard that. But this is about Jennie Platt, Doctor. You attended her ten years ago in the Weston General Hospital."

"I attended hundreds of patients at Weston General, Mr. Justice. What about this Jennie Platt?"

"That's what I want to ask you."

There was a brief pause. "All right, come to my office and I'll have the receptionist admit you."

Dr. Jamieson was a handsome man of perhaps 40. His forehead was high and his sleek black hair grew deeply back on his temples and formed a raven's wing above his dark eyes. He was heavy enough to look successful, but his body didn't appear to be flabby. His face was ruddy and his expression pleasant. Justice had no doubt that he possessed a smooth bedside manner.

He put out his hand. "Your name is familiar," he said with a smile.

"I'm the Justice that isn't blind," the lawyer replied. "A corny joke, but I'm afraid that's the justice you've heard of. I'm a corporation lawyer. Like doctors, we're better known in our own circles."

**J**AMIESON sat on the edge of a leather chair. He offered Justice a cigarette and lighted one himself. He was attempting to relax; obviously he was a man whose time was no longer his own.

"I won't keep you," Justice said. "I want only to hear what you remember about the case of Jennie Platt."

Jamieson frowned. "I don't remember anything about it."

"Surely *you're* not afraid to talk to me about this case, Doctor. Fear doesn't reach this high in Weston?"

"I don't understand," Dr. Jamieson said. "I vaguely recall the name because it was associated with a criminal case. I was resident at Weston General at the time. I made my report and that closed the case as far as I was concerned. Later, I heard that the man had been convicted and sent to prison."

"For life," Justice added. He was watching the doctor's face.

The handsome physician nodded. "I'd heard that," he admitted. "Other than that, Mr. Justice, you know as much about the case as I do."

"I know the man is innocent."

The doctor stiffened. "How do you know that?"

"You should know as well as I. Murdock was framed. He didn't attack Jennie Platt; I doubt if he ever saw her until he was brought before her by the police. You were my hope, Doctor. I was sure you would back me up—with facts."

Jamieson still sat stiffly in his chair. His gaze traveled from Justice to the appointments of the smartly furnished office. The society doctor—Chief of Staff at Weston General. At last he shook his head.

"I was resident, Justice. I recall only that I attended the woman." He stood up. "I'm sorry. I can't give you any more time."

"You can't, Doctor?" said Justice. "Or you won't?"

Jamieson shrugged; suddenly he looked very tired. "There's no need for us to quarrel about it. I must go back now. Sorry I couldn't help more."

Justice nodded, picked up his hat and briefcase. As he walked toward the door, he realized that Jamieson stood in the other doorway, watching him.

"I hope you'll be able to help the



fellow," the doctor said, his voice low, "even though I couldn't be of any assistance."

"I will." There was irony in Justice's voice. "You haven't stopped me, Doctor; you've just caused me delay—a hell of a delay."

## Chapter Nine

**T**HE PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN behind the circular counter in the reception-room at Weston General Hospital was, according to the name-plate, named Audrey Homer. She had direct gray eyes and brown hair that under the fluorescent lights had a red cast. She smiled at Justice.

"I'm looking for some case records of a woman who was a patient in this hospital," he said.

"You'll have to talk to the nurse in charge of records," she replied. "Third door on your right along the corridor."

Justice thanked the girl and followed her directions. There were three women at work in the record-room. One of them looked up when he entered.

"I'm an attorney," Justice said. He

handed her his card. She read it and put it very precisely on the edge of her desk. Justice smiled. She was an old maid. "I would like to see the chart on a woman who was in this hospital."

"All right." The woman picked up a sharpened pencil and poised it over a pad. "What was her name?"

"Jennie Platt."

He was pleased to see that the name meant nothing to her. At least, he wouldn't run into fear or prejudice here.

"And the date?"

"November 22nd, 1941."

She started to write, stopped and laid the pencil down beside the pad. When she looked up, she was not smiling.

"My dear Mr. Justice," she said. "Do you have any idea what you have asked?"

"Yes, I think so."

Her voice was very patient. "Let's say, Mr. Justice, that we have only three hundred patients a day here. That's three hundred different charts a day. More than ten thousand charts a year. In ten years, more than a hundred thousand."

"I'm interested in only one of them."

"We have neither the time nor the manpower it would take to find it."

"If I were willing to look for it myself?"

"It's impossible. You'd need help. Somebody who understands our filing system. We can't spare anybody to aid you. I'm very sorry."

"I'm prepared to pay any expense."

"Ten years ago. . . . A hundred thousand charts ahead of that one. And it might have been a mistake; she might have been treated in some other hospital."

"No. She was brought here."

"I'm sorry. It would not be possible for us to go back that far." She turned away with an air of finality.

Justice returned slowly along the corridor. He started out the front door. He glanced at the receptionist. The light glinted red in her hair. She was watching him.

He walked back over to the desk. She smiled.

"No luck?"

He shook his head.

"I should have warned you about that old gal. She owns this hospital. Pays all the bills out of her own pocket. Orders the doctors around. At least, that's the way she tells it."



Justice tapped on the window with his ring. "Hazel," he called, "Hazel Stroud!" She struggled up on the rumpled bed, peered at him through squinting eyes and shook her head. Obviously she didn't care who he was. She didn't want to talk to anybody. Justice rapped again, harder.

Justice grinned. "Anyhow, she turned me down."

"What did you want?"

At the Paris restaurant, Justice ordered a Manhattan for himself and a beer for Monk Saunders.

"Ten o'clock tonight," Monk said. "You think that receptionist'll do you any good, boss?"

Justice finished his cocktail and ordered another. "You know what I'm going to do between now and then, Monk?" He nodded, pleased with his idea: "I'll bet you the *real* Jane Shaw lives in Weston. I'm going to find her."

At the library, two hours later, Justice went through a city directory for 1941. The Shaw family was listed, with their daughter, Jane. The address was 7565 South Crossing.

This was a long drive, but the address was in a shaded residential section. Justice was glad of that. In the better sections, families stay a long time and ten years is a relatively short period.

The Shaw family no longer lived at 7565. But the woman next door remembered them. "They were good neighbors," she said.

"Do you remember their daughter—I think her name was Jane?"

"Yes. She was a very pretty girl. Married a man named Docker. They don't live too far from here. Wait a minute, I've got their address. We always exchange Christmas cards."

"Thank you," Justice said. He copied down the address. In the street again, he carefully tore it up. Then he drove back to town.

It was ten o'clock that night when Monk and Justice entered the lobby of the Weston General Hospital. There was a blonde at the desk. Justice started toward her. Another woman spoke and he turned.

Audrey Homer came across the foyer. "Right on time," she said.

"This is my assistant, Monk Saunders," said Justice.

Audrey smiled at Monk. "Well, shall we start, Mr. Justice? This is costing you twenty dollars an hour. The records we want are in the basement."

They worked four hours that night. Justice had never realized how many daily charts could pile up in ten years. They were all so tired when they gave up for the night that they barely spoke on the way to the nearest all-night café. Here Justice paid Audrey the eighty dollars she'd earned, and they agreed to meet again the following night at ten.

Four hours on the second night yielded nothing. Monk smuggled in coffee and they worked an extra hour. The third night they found the Out

Ward charts. The fifth night they found the charts for the month of November, 1941.

At four-sixteen A.M., Justice said, "Here it is!"

Monk and Audrey came running. Monk was so excited he shouldered the young woman out of his way in his haste, but she only laughed. The thing was no longer simply a matter of twenty dollars an hour for her. She was as anxious as Justice to find the chart on Jennie Platt, for during the hours they had worked, he had told her the story of Jim Murdock.

Audrey had worked hard to find the chart. She had helped them go through boxes, barrels, thousands of records. Dust had almost choked them and they'd been discouraged by many false leads.

Justice held the paper up for them to see:

*Emergency Out Ward.  
Weston General Hospital.  
November 22nd.*

*Case No. 6889. Doctor Jamieson. Patient's name: Miss Jennie Platt. Age 49. Date: November 16, 1941. Diagnosis: Accidental fall. Present illness: Contusions over eye, nose, mouth and throat.*

*(Signed) Jamieson*

There was an emotional exhaust. Justice could hardly believe his eyes. To make sure, he asked Audrey to read it aloud.

"There is the word of the good doctor himself," Justice said. He shoved the chart into his briefcase.

"Are you going to take that?" Audrey asked.

"I certainly am."

"They may get you for theft."

"Theft?" Justice grinned. "My dear young lady, even if they do, it won't be the first crime committed in the city of Weston."

## Chapter Ten

HELEN RAY ENTERED Justice's private office the next morning at a little after ten. Justice appeared very busy, but when she looked over his shoulder she saw that he was doodling. He had used three full sheets of paper, drawing aimless marks.

"Are you *that* tired?" she asked. "Or are you discouraged?"

"I'm tired, all right," said Justice. "But I am tempting my mind to go to work on a screwy problem by associating it with screwy ideas on sheets of paper."

"Should I draw up a straitjacket and sit down?"

She sat on the chair at the side of his desk. He smiled and shook his head. "One day Nick Bonner ap-

peared, to threaten me," Justice said. "What has become of Bonner? Did he actually believe that a few words were all it would take to frighten me off this thing?"

"What are you getting at now?"

"Who would hire them to try to frighten me as if I were a small-time hoodlum trying to muscle into a pinball racket?"

He drew another picture. Helen looked at it, made a face. She wasn't very impressed.

"Who would have the most to lose if you took the case?" she said.

"That's what I mean. The people who framed Murdock, of course. And do you know where that leads me, Helen?"

"I wouldn't even guess."

"Almost to the Governor's mansion at Springfield—to the man who wants to be the next Governor. He was prosecutor at the time of Jim Murdock's trial. It seems to me that if I were running for Governor of this State, or any other, I'd hate to have a Jim Murdock on my conscience."

"And if I did, I would rather have him in prison where he couldn't be heard," Helen said. She looked thoughtful. "I think you're right."

MONK SAUNDERS and Justice started across the littered walk to the entrance of the old Dakota Building on 12th Street. Monk grabbed Justice's arm.

"Look, boss," he said. "Comin' out the door. Nick Bonner!"

For a moment the three men held tableau on the street. Bonner broke first. He turned and scurried off along the sidewalk without looking over his shoulder.

"Can you overtake him, Monk?"

"They thought I'd never learn shorthand, boss," Monk said. He moved away along the sidewalk, light on his feet, fast for such a big man.

Justice watched him a moment; then he entered the building. The corridor was dark. A magazine stand filled the left wall. At the rear was an open-grill elevator.

On the shabby office directory, Justice found the name CORB REEVES, PUBLIC RELATIONS. Reeves had an office on the third floor. Justice went up in the elevator.

Corb Reeves was a man who had plainly seen too much of life. Opening the door, he said, "Come in, Justice. What brings you down this way?"

"I came to see you, Corb. It's been a long time."

Reeves motioned him to a chair and sat behind the battered desk. "It's been a long time since I could afford your fees, Counselor."

Justice looked at him. "Have you had a bad time, Corb?"



Reeves shook his head. "I've come down a long way, Counselor, since the days when I told you I wanted the big time, and you could have the hard work."

Justice smiled. "If you'd only let blackmail alone, Corb. You could have handled everything else."

The little man's shoulders straightened. Then he smiled, remembering. "That's right," he said. "The liquor, the women, the racing and roulette, I always handled them with my left hand, didn't I? That's the truth. My hand held the reins." His mouth made a hard line. "But you can't see all the gravy, Justice, and not wonder how some of it would taste. Public Relations—that was me. Hired by the biggest. Only they always wanted the same thing. The hottest public-relations man in the business. Any little two-bit squid-chaser can get a client's name in the paper. The big-timers, the boys that counted, the Corb Reeves, they were the fellows who knew how to keep the names out of the paper—and when."

"You had the touch," Justice agreed. "Yes. I had it. They could have their women and their troubles, or they could have their men and their illegitimate babies; and if they were Corb Reeves' clients, they were safe. Yes, by God, they were safe. Safe from every stinking thing in the world but Corb Reeves."

"I hear you're reformed now, Corb," Justice said gently. "I hear you can hear a bad thing about a client and forget it and not even try to use it yourself."

**C**ORB REEVES laughed, but bitterly. "Why should I try anything? What clients have I got any more? My God, I could blackmail maybe Suzie Glutz down at the Chinese Taproom? She hires me. And, brother, she has secrets that would curl your hair. Not the hottest babes I ever handled in the thirties could touch Suzie. Only, just what is she? Nothing. Nobody. Oh, yeah, Counselor, I've reformed. There's nothing that'll reform a man like the lack of opportunity!"

Justice watched the publicity man pour drinks for them.

"You talk fast and you talk interestingly, Reeves," he said. "But I can't follow you all the way down the road. You talk about lack of opportunity. You have opportunity, or else my grapevine has been lying to me. And I don't have anything to do with walkie-talkies that lie. In the first place, I hate sneaks. And sneaks who are liars I abominate. My spies know this. And that's why they bring me the truth."

The color of Corb Reeves' face had heightened a little.

"And the truth is, Counselor?"

"The truth, my good old friend, is that you have a job. A job that should bring you a nice bit of cash between now and the elections. And more than that, a job that would line up a lot of shakedown between now and eternity."

"You mean this political-party job? Oh, look, Counselor, you can't think that! My God! All right, first, the job lasts four or five months at the most. Say ten months because they usually hire me first."

"And the set-ups that last forever?" Justice prompted.

**R**EEVES shook his head. "Don't ever try anything like that on a politician, Counselor. I'll tell you about politicians. They get in less trouble than you'd imagine. Mostly because they're small-minded. It takes a man with imagination and heart and guts and courage to get in trouble. That's why I used to love my old-time clients so. They got in such messes. Sometimes nothing in God's world could save them—but they went down like gallants. And sometimes they dragged me with them. But politicians! My God, they're little twirps."

"Such a bitter, vicious picture," Justice said.

"Such honest-to-God truth," Reeves replied.

The man hunched forward in his chair. "Justice, this is fine, but somehow I don't think you came up here to hear about me and my misspent past."

"No, I didn't. I looked you up; I found you way down on the payroll of Earl Thompson's opposition party. So I knew you were the public-relations man in charge of the news that wasn't ever going to get in the newspapers—the files where whispering campaigns are born, the nest of the spidery whispers that defeat a candidate when nothing else will."

"You don't put it in a very kindly manner," Reeves said. "But I'm old and disillusioned. I suppose you're right."

"So I've come to you with a pair of hundred-dollar bills in my wallet."

"Sounds wonderful. Political-party payrolls are damned slow things. What do you want, Counselor?"

"What's the story on Earl Thompson?"

"Just like that?" Reeves laughed. "Why, Counselor, the whole story on Earl Thompson is worth two grand at least."

"Well, suppose you start talking. We'll cut it off in lengths like sausage. When I've heard enough, we'll cut it and pay."

Corb was interested. "What d'you want to know?"

"Don't you want to get out your files?"

Reeves smiled. "The best file I have in the world is in here." He tapped his graying temple.

Justice laughed. "All right, then, Corb. So you have your files handy. Can you tell me this: Who are Thompson's friends? I mean his *real* friends—the kind you would keep in your files."

Reeves nodded. "Well, we had Thompson shadowed for about six months before he announced for Governor. He had a lot of company; a lot of secret visitors who met him in a hell of a lot of places."

Silently, Justice took out two new crisp hundred-dollar bills and laid them on the desk before the publicity man. Reeves looked at them, smiled and nodded.

"So, I figure there are about three names you'd be interested in—at shall we say, an even hundred apiece?"

Justice stared at him. "How do you know I'd be interested in them?"

"Well, Counselor, it's like this: I spent some time in the pen—like I said, I didn't always come off light! I still got friends there. Just yesterday I heard you were working for a kid I met up there. Least, he *was* a kid when I met him in Stateville. He was just coming in, his first semester, the year I graduated. He was mixed up and confused and bitter. But he was a good kid underneath it. That's the way it was with Murdock. So I'm glad to know you're working for him."

"But it doesn't interfere with your business acumen?"

"I've gone hungry. Until you have, don't attempt to judge me. Nothing interferes with business with me, not any more. Hard rolls from the wastecans back of bakeries—not just once in a while, but morning after morning. . . . You want to hear those names, Counselor?"

"At a hundred each, Corb, C.O.D."

**W**ELL— There's a farmer. He's named Cain Gilbert. I've put private eyes on him, but we can't get a thing. He has a farm near Weston, only he doesn't farm. He has the place kept trim and neat, and he lives off the fat of the land—a lovely cliché, Counselor. But why? We can find out just one thing: Thompson rents a summer place from Cain Gilbert. We can't find out why. And we can't find out why Cain visits Earl Thompson regularly about the 28th of every month. Then he goes back to Weston. He sits on his rear and does nothing until it's time to see Earl Thompson again. Isn't that interesting, Counselor?"

Justice said nothing. But he handed Corb Reeves another new hundred-dollar bill. The little man's pale hand trembled as he added it to the two on the desk.



"Suppose you start talking," Justice told him, "and we'll cut it off in lengths, like sausage. When I've heard enough, we'll cut it and pay." Silently, Justice took out two new hundred-dollar bills and laid them before Reeves. He held three more like it in his hands, temptingly.

"Then we found out that Zito Suello calls up Thompson. They used to meet—until Suello had to run to Canada."

"The narcotics racketeer?"

"That's him. I won't say Thompson deals with Suello. I couldn't; I have no proof. But I know they are friends. So I put men on Suello and his past. And guess what? I found out he used to operate out of Weston, Illinois. Yes, he did—ten-twelve years ago."

Justice whistled through his teeth. He held out a fourth hundred-dollar bill.

REEVES looked worried. "How you expect to get this kind of money back? You're trying to free Jim Murdock from prison—but Murdock doesn't have even as much money as there is on my desk here."

Justice looked at Reeves penetratingly. "A woman hired me to represent Murdock," he replied. "And whether she knows it or not, she's going to pay plenty."

Reeves looked a little pale, but he managed to smile. "All right," he said. "It's her money." He turned in his chair and said, "Do you happen to know the president of the Sur-Life Drug Chain?"

"Should I?"

"Shouldn't you? You're a corporation lawyer."

"All right. So I know him. I've never represented his company or opposed it in court. But I know him; his name is Barney Welsh."

"You're right. You got any idea what Barney Welsh was doing ten years ago?"

Justice smiled. "Marrying the daughter of the Sur-Life Chairman of the Board?"

"Nothing so crude. Ten years ago, Barney Welsh was just another store manager in that mammoth chain. His is a real success story—from store manager ten years ago to president of a nationwide company today. The American-type success story. I give you Barney Welsh."

"Is that the third name?"

"That's right. Let's see your green."

Justice handed over still another hundred-dollar bill. At that moment the door behind them was flung open and Monk Saunders limped in. He was sweated down.

He shook his head. "Damn me," he said. "Damn me, I couldn't do it, boss. I couldn't catch him."

"It's all right, Monk. It's okay," Justice said.

"Couldn't catch who?" Corb Reeves asked. He motioned Monk to a chair. The big man toppled into it, breathing through his mouth. Reeves poured a shot of whisky and handed it to Monk.

Monk drank. "Damn me, I couldn't catch the little punk. Bonner—Nick Bonner."

Reeves leaned forward. "Who?"

Justice was watching Reeves. "That name mean anything to you, Reeves?"

Reeves tried to smile. "Not to me, Counselor," he said. "I never heard the name."

Justice kept looking at him. Reeves began to fiddle nervously with the crisp new bills on his desk.

"All right, then," Justice prompted. "What makes me interested in this man Barney Welsh?"

"Well, he's head of Sur-Life Drug Company. Remember a couple of years ago they got in trouble with the Government. Something about narcotics."

"Should that interest me?"

Corb jumped up. He leaned over Justice. "Well, you were sure as hell interested in the other two, and they're mixed up in the drug traffic. I'll bet my life on that!"

"Zito Suello, yes. That's been proved. But Cain Gilbert? I thought you said he was a farmer."

"Yes, damn it! A farmer with summer places to rent—a farmer who never does anything. And all three of them are nocturnal callers on a man named Earl Thompson."

"All right. I agree they're all hooked in with Thompson. It makes sense; it figures. But what about Murdock? How does Barney Welsh, head of Sur-Life Drug Company, tie in with Jim Murdock?"

Corb grinned at him. It was a wolfish grin—wide, ugly.

"Because! And damn it, I ought to charge you another hundred! Ain't you guessed yet where Barney Welsh was store manager ten years ago? Well, I'll tell you, because I like the color of your flag. He was a store manager at the Sur-Life Drugstore in Weston, Illinois."

**F**OR a moment they were all silent in the room. At last Justice said, "It makes a wonderful set-up, Corb. Because as you and I both know, Jim Murdock was a bookkeeper ten years ago, wasn't he? A bookkeeper for the Sur-Life Drug Company, in Weston."

"Yes. I think we both know that."

"It's just a little *too* pat, my good and crooked friend. Why did you have these three names waiting for me? You'd have given them to me for free, wouldn't you? You just saw a chance to latch on to half a grand. But if I'd insisted, I could have had these names for free. Why, Corb? Why?"

"All right. The political party I work for got interested in Jim Murdock. That was a stinking case. It stands out when you dig back into Earl Thompson's past. So I investi-

gated for the party. At the same time I was investigating for Jim Murdock. And that meant I was helping you. So like I said, I been hungry. That's for the birds. I been a help to you. So why shouldn't you pay me for it? Even Jim Murdock would want to pay me if he had the money."

"I'm not complaining. It's just that I see that this political party would like to get Jim Murdock free, wouldn't they? They're willing to help me get him free. So they can use him for a political football."

Corb shook his head. "My party ain't that bad, Counselor. They'd love to see Jim Murdock freed. If he's innocent, swell. But innocent or not, they know that Jim Murdock is pure dynamite where Earl Thompson is concerned. So that's why you got our help. That's why you got those three names." He pocketed the five bills. "And now, Counselor, it's up to you. It's your ball; run with it."

## Chapter Eleven

**T**HE BIG CAR PURRED SMOOTHLY along Sheridan Road. Monk, crouched over the steering-wheel in his habitual driving pose, was sweating.

There were two men in the back seat of the car. One of them was small, sharp-featured. His name was Fred Taylor. The other was barrel-chested and swarthy. He wore no hat, and his greasy hair was thin and plastered down on his scalp. He was named Al Montavani, and evidently he wasn't happy.

Of them all, only Justice was calm. He sat relaxed on the front seat beside Monk. His head was tipped back, his eyes were closed and he was humming.

"Boss," Monk said at last.

"Hmm?"

"Won't there be anybody at Thompson's house?"

"If there is, he'll have no more business there than we do," Justice replied. "I've already explained, Monk, Thompson has set up headquarters in the Sherwin Hotel in Chicago. He has his whole family with him. The Weston house is closed. We had Fred case the place, and that was his report, wasn't it, Fred?"

"I didn't see a soul," Fred Taylor said from the back seat. He dragged deeply on his cigarette and then tossed it through the window. "Milk bottles on the back step, a newspaper on the front lawn that somebody forgot to take in. Signs like that you can't beat in my business."

"That's fine," Justice said softly.

"There, Monk. Now are you satisfied?"

"No," Monk said. "It's still breakin' and enterin'—"

"That's right," Fred Taylor agreed.

"It's trespassin' unlawfully," Monk went on. "It's searching without a warrant. Dammit, I don't mind gettin' in trouble, boss. I been in trouble before. I been in trouble most of my life. But what I can't see is why you should get mixed up in it! The three of us, we could handle it. We're nothing—nobody. All three of us is hoods, bad boys that you got out of the can when nobody else cared if we lived or died. We're willin' to take over this job, boss. Ain't that right, boys?"

"Sure," Fred Taylor said. "Why you think I'm so noivous? I act like it's my foist job. And why? Just because Mr. Justice is along. There ain't no use in you gettin' mixed up in this, Mr. Justice. What if we're caught?"

"Yeah," Monk said. "What happens to Jim Murdock then?"

"If you fellows are as good as I have reason to suspect you are, we won't be caught," Justice asserted.

Earl Thompson's home was on one of the best streets in Weston. Monk drove by once, very slowly.

"Looks ideal," Justice observed. "The neighbors are cut off by either a fence or a hedge. They're not near enough to be attracted by anything less than a yell. You can stop the car, Monk."

Monk applied the brakes, and the car halted in the middle of the street. "All right, Fred; you and Al get out here. Monk will drive me back up the street and I'll approach from the other side. By the time I get up to the house, Fred should have effected an entrance."

Justice waited until Monk had driven about a hundred feet beyond the west line of the Thompson estate.

"Okay, Monk. I'll get out here."

"Boss—"

"You drive back and park across the street, Monk. Now remember, *relax!* Don't get excited. If anything happens, just touch the horn once and move on. The three of us will separate and meet you at Tony's Bar, on Main Street. Got it?"

Monk looked straight ahead. He only nodded.

Justice smiled. He crossed the road and swung along the sidewalk. At the drive, he turned and entered the yard of the Thompson place.

He was glad about Monk. There was the beginning of a social consciousness. Monk worried about jobs like this. Monk worried about Justice's getting in trouble. Once Monk had gone on jobs like this just for the hell of it. There had been a thrill in it. Poor Monk! Justice knew he was hating every minute of this night in Weston.

Montavani hissed softly from the hedge that banked the house.

"It was easy," Al whispered. "We found French doors. Fred picked the lock while I was looking around for a wrench to crack the glass with. Boy, that Fred—he's good."

They crossed the flagstone terrace to the French door that Fred Taylor held open for them. They entered the gloom of the tightly-closed house. "Leave that door open," Justice whispered. "I like fresh air."

Fred Taylor said, "All right, I've already got us another door unlocked that we can use if we have to."

Justice nodded. "You got your tools, Al? There's a wall safe in the library. It's behind a picture of the Governor's Mansion."

Montavani whistled between his teeth. "You sure get a thing figured out, don't you, Mr. Justice? You never leave anything to chance. How did you find out about the safe?"

"Oh, I knew that you could locate it, Al, and in a hurry. But I knew a man who once worked here in Thompson's house. I thought it would save time to know where the thing was."

Al Montavani was already removing the picture of the Governor's Mansion from the wall.

"If there were only some way to open that safe without jimmying the lock," Justice said.

Al looked at him. "There is, Mr. Justice; only it takes time. It takes study. I just don't know if we got that kind of time."

"Suppose we take it," Justice said. "I'll look around and see if I can't find us something to drink. It'll relax our nerves while we wait."

He moved around in the gray gloom. He heard Fred Taylor whispering across the room, "Here's a small bar, Mr. Justice. What you like—Scotch, rye, bourbon?"

At length Montavani spoke up. "Here it is, Mr. Justice." He swung the door of the safe back.

"All right, Fred, close the place up," Justice directed.

Fred Taylor went about the room. He moved as silently as a cat, closing doors and drawing draperies. Soon the room admitted no line of light from outside. Justice snapped on his flashlight. By that time, Montavani had the contents of the safe on a cleared table.

They whistled at the loot. There were diamond earrings, bracelets and rings that caught the flashlight's gleam and winked back at it. There were bonds and stocks, tied together with thick rubber bands. And there was an account book.

Justice spent twenty minutes going through this small brown book; at last he pocketed it. Then he started through the other things from the safe.

There was another small book. The writing in it was not at once clear to Justice. Plainly it was in code. Justice pocketed it, too.

He had just opened his mouth to say, "Close her up, Al," when there was a short sharp bark from the street—a single bleat from Monk.

Al rammed the last of the articles into the safe, closed it and hung the picture over it.

"Okay," Justice said hastily. "We are each on his own. You two go out the rear way. I'll go out the French doors. We'll meet at Tony's, and if you're caught and jailed, call there. We'll wait there until we hear from you."

Justice went out the French door. He closed it behind him, hearing the click of the lock. He smiled. Fred had tampered with it, but he hadn't ruined it. Justice stood on the flagstone terrace, listening, waiting.

THE car was gone from across the street, of course. He waited, hardly breathing, listening for footsteps. There were none; nothing happened. The hackles stood along his neck. Were they waiting for him in the hedges? What had frightened Monk away?

He must relax. That had been his advice to the others, all evening. But his heart was working overtime and he had a lax feeling of emptiness in his stomach. He wanted to run. He hadn't felt frightened like this since he was a kid. What was Helen Ray going to say when she saw the headlines: ATTORNEY HELD AS HOUSE-BREAKER!

A twig broke somewhere in his right. Justice went cold all over. He did something he'd have sworn he would never do—he bolted and ran. He raced all the way across the wide expanse of Earl Thompson's front lawn.

His feet hit the sidewalk, then he stopped abruptly as a car turned, catching him in the full glare of its headlights. The car completed the turn and he began walking, trying to be calm. He could feel the two notebooks slapping against his side. Thompson would crucify him if he were caught now with those in his possession!

The car hadn't continued on. It was idling now, along the curb, keeping pace with him. He resisted the urge to run, trying to ignore the car. But it stayed with him, and, as he neared the corner, it stopped. The front door was opened. Obviously, it was an invitation to get in.

He stopped and looked. The figure at the wheel was that of a woman. He walked cautiously over to the curb.

"Well, get in," said a caustic feminine voice. "Don't you think it

would be better for me to take you in than to wait for the cops?"

"Helen!" Justice slid into the seat beside her, pulled the door shut. She stepped on the gas and the car shot down the street. "What are you doing here?"

"You'll need a lawyer to spring you," she replied, her voice still sharp.

"What's the charge—invasion of privacy, larceny, breaking and entering, or just plain burglary?"

Justice grinned. "Baby, I don't know what I'd do without you."

"For once, I agree with you. . . . Well, what did you find?"

"Thompson's records," Justice replied. "I think they're the names and addresses of dummy purchasers of narcotics. Some other names—probably of hoodlums who handled the stuff."

She handled the wheel expertly, her eyes on the road ahead. She acted as if she knew exactly where she was going. "Of course, I know," she said, when Justice asked her that. "But I'm afraid you'll be late. You'll have to buy the drinks."

## Chapter Twelve

CAIN GILBERT OPENED THE DOOR and invited Peter Justice into his front room. Gilbert's farm was a prosperous-appearing hundred and ninety acres, about eight miles from the Weston city limits. The fields rolled like easy waves out and away from the freshly-painted three-story house, and they were sown in grass and close-cropped like a new haircut. The barns and outbuildings were all newly painted, but they had a clean look that could mean only one thing: they were not being used as part of a man's farming.

It was a warm day, but Gilbert's shirt was freshly ironed and starched; he looked cool and rested. Justice frowned as he followed the other man into the parlor.

An attic fan pulled cool air across the room. Gilbert motioned the lawyer to a chair and flopped into one himself.

"A lawyer, eh?" he said. His thick brows moved up from his squinted eyes. Justice smiled to himself. By trade at least, this man was a farmer. It was in his voice, and it was in the squinted eyes—eyes habitually tightened against the sun while he followed his plow, or drove his harrow over his sprawling farmlands. "Can't think why a lawyer'd drive all the way out from Chicago to talk to me." He lifted his voice. "Hey, Ma! Make coffee, will you? Got company—lawyer out from Chicago."

"All right, Pa," Gilbert's wife answered from the rear of the house, but

she did not come into the front room, where the two men sat.

Justice said, "There is no reason to delay telling you the purpose of my visit, Mr. Gilbert. How well do you know the candidate for Governor, Earl Thompson?"

Gilbert smiled. "I know he's candidate for Governor, Mr. Justice."

A look of petulance pulled at Justice's face. "I'd hoped we'd get along better than this, Mr. Gilbert."

Gilbert leaned forward. "What does that mean?"

Justice said: "I may as well tell you I have records of monthly rentals paid by Mr. Thompson to you on a summer place at Weston Lake."

"All right. So I rented Mr. Thompson a summer place."

"For the past twelve years."

"For the past twelve years."

"And you don't know anything about him at all?"

Gilbert allowed himself to smile. "He pays his rent regularly. What else should I know?"

"That's up to you. It seems to me that if a man were renting from me, for twelve years, a cottage less than two miles from this farmhouse, I'd know something about him."

"What are you leading up to, Mr. Justice? It seems to me that you're walking into my house and demanding quite a lot."

Justice nodded. "I am indeed, sir. That's why I hoped that you would understand. I would not be here like this—I would not dare be here like this—if I were not reasonably sure of where I stand. First, I'll tell you a bit of news that may put us on a new footing with each other. Perhaps it will shock you, and it may anger you. Before I tell you, I want to say that I came upon this news accidentally. It would mean nothing to me except that I'm interested in a case involving a man whom Earl Thompson knows. And since you know Earl Thompson, I am interested in you."

**GILBERT'S** thick brows were pulled down now, and his eyes were narrowed, his jaw set. Here, plainly, was a stubborn man. "All right, Mr. Justice. What is this information?"

"Just this: Mr. Thompson was being shadowed for some months recently. You were seen to be a recurring, secret visitor. You were investigated as a matter of course. That's all. But that's enough for me. I want you to tell me one thing, Mr. Gilbert. Why does Earl Thompson rent that house?"

Gilbert shifted in his chair. "Why should I tell you that, Mr. Justice?"

"The story I have just told you is not reason enough?"

"No, sir. It ain't."

"Plainly, it demonstrates that you have lied about knowing Thompson."

"So what if I lied? What's to keep me from lying to you, or telling you the truth, if and how it pleases me? Seems to me, Mr. Justice, you expect quite a lot from a man who is a stranger."

Justice stood up; his voice was very soft. "I may be a friend, more than a stranger. There is no reason for you to get in trouble. But suppose I tell you that I've found out that Thompson's family never visited that summer house. Suppose I tell you that some of my men visited it and learned that it is situated on an inaccessible part of the lake. It is entirely surrounded by fence, and is reached by a single gravel road. That this road is cut in half by a gate with padlocks, and that the cyclone fence around the place is topped by barbed wire."

"I'd tell you that I'm pretty well acquainted with my own property."

"Then you admit you know what that house is being used for?"

"Now, see here, I'm admitting nothing. What is this, a courtroom?"

"It might very well be a dress rehearsal for one, Mr. Gilbert."

"What kind of threat is that?"

"It isn't a threat at all. I admit I haven't come here expecting a man who has made a large income from yearly rentals to Earl Thompson to talk to me, who has nothing to offer. But I must tell you, Mr. Gilbert, that I know Earl Thompson very infrequently visits that summer house. And yet it is visited summer and winter. Even a snow-plow keeps the road open in the bad months."

"That's Mr. Thompson's business, and ain't any concern of mine."

"And believe me, it wouldn't be mine, except for a man named Murdock."

"Who?"

"James Murdock. You ever hear of him?"

Cain Gilbert started to shake his head. Then he changed his mind. He nodded. "I've heard of him."

"Then you know that he was sentenced to life imprisonment for assaulting a Weston woman named Jennie Platt."

"I do. What's that got to do with my summer place on the lake?"

"Maybe a great deal. As I said, I have the records that this place has been rented for twelve years. That means that Earl Thompson rented it ten years ago. I would like to ask you one more time. Do you know just why Earl Thompson rents that house?"

"No, sir, I don't."

"You're going to find yourself in court, Mr. Gilbert. And when you give that same answer to my question, you're going to find yourself cited for perjury."

"Perjury?"

"Lying under oath."

"Lying? Are you coming into my house and calling me a liar?"

"Yes, sir, I am; I see it as a favor to you. You're not under oath now, Mr. Gilbert. Sometimes a quiet talk ahead of time saves a lot of trouble when you are under oath. I can tell you there's going to be an explosion. And when that explosion comes, Mr. Gilbert, whether you're safe or blown to kingdom come with some names like Suello, Thompson, Welsh and others, depends on you. It depends on you right now."

"What is this? What sort of business is this?"

**J**UST this, Mr. Gilbert. I say that you know why Earl Thompson rents that cottage. A summer place! His family has never been near it! But Suello has been there, hasn't he? And cars owned by Suello. And you've been there. When a man rents property to other men, knowingly rents it to be used for illegal purposes, he's liable to prosecution, Mr. Gilbert. And that's just what has happened to you."

"Why, that's not true. When that cottage was rented from me, I had no idea why it was being rented."

"And when they put cyclone fence topped with barbed wire all the way around it, you still didn't know? You didn't suspect? You didn't even inquire?"

Cain Gilbert looked ill. He swallowed hard. "No, sir. By then, I didn't have to inquire."

"By then, you knew."

"Yes, sir, I did. But what could I do? Those men are powerful. All I could do by then was go along with them. At first they had nothing but contempt for me. I was a hayseed farmer. But by then, I had a certain value—I had learned a lot, and it was easier to pay the rent I asked for that cottage than anything else."

"You trusted them? Even knowing what had happened to Jim Murdock?"

"What has Jim Murdock got to do with my summer place?"

"Why don't you tell me?"

"It seems to me, Mr. Justice, that you're revealing an awful lot to me. What makes you believe that I won't repeat all I know to Mr. Thompson or anyone else who might be interested? Things could be very disagreeable for you."

"Because I think you'll see they will be a great deal more disagreeable for you. You're a man they're allowing to live on the fat of the land just because nobody suspects you, and you've learned to keep a tight mouth. What happens when they learn that I know that you collect exorbitant rentals from Earl Thompson every month? That I know that ten years ago, at

least, Suello used your cottage as a central base for narcotics operations?"

"How do you know that?"

"By addition. By adding what I have learned to the accounts I have come across. By breaking down a coded name file and adding those names to the truths that the law-enforcement agencies have learned about them in the past twelve years. By adding all that to the fact that Barney Welsh is a friend of Earl Thompson's, and that both of them began in this part of the country. And both of them infrequently met other very charming citizens at a hideaway owned by you on Weston Lake."

Cain Gilbert was now sweating. "Knowing things like that and proving them against men as important as Earl Thompson are pretty different, Mr. Justice. You're not stampedin' me into anything foolish."

"Just don't stampede yourself, Mr. Gilbert. Look at it this way: If that house is raided, and evidence is found there, you're going to be the goat. It would be nice to have a lawyer on your side, a lawyer who knows the facts as I know them, Mr. Gilbert."

Gilbert wiped his brow.

"Just be true to yourself, Mr. Gilbert. Just ask yourself what would happen if the U. S. narcotics men *did* happen to find cocaine, heroin, marijuana or any of the other drugs on your lake property. Would Barney

Welsh protect you? Would Earl Thompson admit that he knows you? Would Suello?"

"You—you make it sound bad, Mr. Justice."

"It is bad—it has been all along, and you knew it. But you've deceived yourself. You wanted to believe that because big men were mixed up in it, nothing could happen either to them or to you. They might exert influence or wealth enough in their favor to get away with it."

"Why are you doing this? Why are you interested in all this?"

"I'm interested in Jim Murdock. Suppose you hear this: Murdock was a bookkeeper for Sur-Life Drugstores here in Weston ten years ago. Barney Welsh was the Sur-Life store manager. Zito Suello was a punk, a hoodlum operating a small-time narcotics racket in and around Weston. Ten years later, Murdock is in prison. Suello is in Canada, but safe and doing all right. Barney Welsh is head of the drug chain, and is a close friend of Earl Thompson. Thompson still pays rent on a summer place owned by you. It seems to me that somewhere along the line, Jim Murdock ran afoul of these men. They are still on top of the world. Jim Murdock is in prison for life. If you know anything about that at all, tell me about it, and I'll fight for you as I'll fight for Jim Murdock."

"When the time comes," Gilbert protested, "there may not be anything of me to fight for. Or if you did fight, what good would it do? How can I hope to escape?"

"By continuing to keep your mouth shut. By going on as you have—on the surface at least. By telling me all you can about these men."

"There's not much I can add to what you know. But one thing made a terrible impression on me, Mr. Justice. I was at that summer house one night ten years ago. Zito Suello was there, and Earl Thompson, and Barney Welsh. They were talking about a man named Murdock. A kid, he was then, working in Welsh's drug store. Suello wanted Murdock killed—and Welsh was willing. I can still see them, talking it over, planning, chewing it over. They gave all their reasons why the kid should die. He had found out something about the narcotics operations through his book-keeping work. The syndicate wanted him killed. I can tell you I sweated, hearing the cold way it was discussed. But Thompson stopped them. They were all wrong, he said."

"Thompson was State's Attorney then, and a powerful speaker. He pointed out that there had never been any suspicion of narcotics dealings in Weston, and now was no time to start any such whispers. There was no talk even that the syndicate was operating in Weston, either. There had never been a gang killing in Weston. It would be bad policy to kill Jim Murdock."

"I stood there and heard Thompson tell them that it would be better if Murdock was sent to prison where he would be out of the way, discredited, and cut off from the outside world. Earl Thompson told them he would work out the details, and that they had better leave it to him. And that's what they decided to do." Cain Gilbert sighed. "But I won't tell that in court. I won't appear in court. I'll swear it's all a lie."

Justice smiled. "You've helped me, Gilbert. If I take you to court now, you have my word for it, it will be safe for you to be there. You can stand up then and speak like a man—like a free man, after all of these years."

Gilbert licked his lips, wiped his face on a large linen handkerchief. He looked toward the kitchen. "Oh, Ma," he called, "I guess we don't need that coffee after all."

"Oh, yes, you do," a feminine voice replied. "You need it now more than ever, Mr. Gilbert."

Justice looked up, startled.

Smiling sweetly, Helen Ray walked into the room and put a tray down on the center-table. "Cream and sugar, Mr. Gilbert?"



"Don't tell Ray that Dad gave us a TV set, or he'll want to stay up and see the fights."

## Chapter Thirteen

THE NAME UNDER THE DOORBELL was Joyce Adams. Justice smiled and pressed on the bell. There was no sign of movement from within the apartment. He jabbed the bell again, and kept his finger on it. He heard someone inside the door, and a woman's angered voice: "All right! All right! Give me a chance."

She opened the door—and gasped at the sight of Peter Justice. He bowed elaborately.

"Ah, Jane," he said. "Jane Shaw—the poor unhappy girl who has waited all these years for her love to get out of prison! Kept herself young and beautiful for him. Robbed cash registers for him."

The woman swallowed with effort. "What do you want? How did you find me?"

He shrugged. "Well, I didn't find you at the address you gave Monk Saunders when you were pretending to be Jane Shaw. But you have friends and you have enemies, Joyce. I just kept questioning both until I found you. I was quite anxious to find you."

Her voice was a whisper. "Why?" "Why? You were going to pay me your life's savings. You were going to pay me fifteen hundred dollars just to get your beloved Jim Murdock out of prison. I tell you, I was moved by your sincerity."

"What do you want with me?" "You don't have fifteen hundred dollars, do you?"

"If you know so much about me, you know I don't. You know I was canned for clouting at Acropolis' restaurant. All right, I lied to you. What do you want with me now?"

"I'm going up to Stateville, Joyce. And I'm taking you with me."

Her head moved back and forth. "No!" she whispered. "No! Why should I?"

"Don't you want to see the man for whom you pleaded so eloquently? Don't you want to see what he looks like?"

"No."

"Why? You didn't think it was going to end when you were paid your thirty-five or forty dollars for impersonating Jane Shaw, did you?"

"It was fifty dollars," she said. "There isn't much you wouldn't do for fifty dollars, is there, Joyce?"

She shook her head. She met his eyes levelly. "No," she admitted, "not much."

He smiled at her. "And in spite of that, I like you. You're at least honest about your dishonesty."

"Please, let me alone."

He shook his head, and stepped into the small crowded room beyond her. "I'm sorry, but I can't, Joyce. I'm

afraid you're going to have to move out of this apartment. You're moving in with me, Joyce, until after the trial of Jim Murdock—"

"Trial?"

"Oh, yes. There's going to be a trial. Jim Murdock is going on trial. But I want it to be safe for him. I want him to be assured of a safe trial. You're going to live in my place, Joyce, and you're going to see only the people Monk decides you'll see. You won't be able to use the telephone. You can't mail any letters. But don't worry; it's only temporary. Your love, Jim Murdock, has had to live like that for ten years."

"He's not my love. I never heard of him before. I never saw him."

"I know. It was fifty quick bucks to put on a tearful act: The girl he left behind. Somebody hired you, Joyce, and there was a reason for hiring you. Did anybody happen to mention that reason to you?"

She swallowed, shook her head. He knew she lied.

"Well, it won't matter. You're going to be with me until after the trial, anyway. Of course after you meet the real Jim Murdock, and spend a few days in my place, you might change your mind. You might tell us who hired you. You might see that Jim Murdock is worth a little more than fifty bucks."

"I don't want to know Jim Murdock—I don't want to know *any* man. I got my fifty bucks; that's all it meant to me and now it's over. I'm sorry. But that's all there is to it."

"Not quite," Justice said. His voice was very hard. "You are coming to my place, Joyce, just as I told you. But first you are going to Stateville with me—tonight."

A baby's cry punctuated Justice's sentence. For a moment they stared at each other. Joyce's face was very white.

"All right," she said. "It's a baby. My baby. Sure, I need fifty bucks. I need all the money I can get; I'll do anything I can for it. I don't care what Steve Acropolis told you about me. I don't care what any man says. So far as I care they can all go to hell—you along with them, Mr. Justice! The only guy I ever cared about walked out on us. And my little girl and I are getting along all right. We don't need anybody."

Justice smiled. "That's fine," he said. "Bring the baby along. Monk will be glad to watch her while you and I visit Jim Murdock in Stateville. And later, she'll be quite happy in my apartment."

SELWYN, the warden's secretary, ushered in Peter Justice and Joyce Adams. She looked very tense and white about the mouth.

"This is Miss Shaw," Justice said. "Jane Shaw. She was Murdock's sweetheart ten years ago. She has never married. I thought it was only fair that she should get to see him."

The warden made no pretense that he was pleased to see them.

"Justice, I hoped that, after you talked to Murdock, you wouldn't come back. That man is in this prison for life. There's nothing you can do for him."

"I disagree heartily, Tom. That man is on his way out of here. Look at Jane Shaw. *Look at her.* Do you think I'm heartless enough to give her hope if I didn't know that I could get Murdock out of here?"

The irony in his voice was lost on the warden but not on the phony Jane Shaw. She looked down at her hands.

"There's something else behind this, Justice. What do *you* care about a man named Murdock? Who is paying you? What do you get out of it? What do you want?"

"I want to see justice done," the lawyer replied. "That's all I want."

"I know what you want. You want to move in here, Justice. You think you can use this thing to get you somewhere."

Justice's voice rose. "I don't think we'd better talk any more, Tom. Just let us see Murdock."

"All right. But I'll still find out what you want."

"I'll tell you what I want, Tom—I've decided I want your hide. I'm going to have it and I'm going to nail it to the wall."

JUSTICE was still irritated from the exchange of words when he was shown into the room the warden reserved for snooping purposes.

There was not much change in Murdock since the last time. And yet, there was something. Justice could feel it in the room. The man had hope. Not much—just a bare spot of hope.

"Hello, Jim." Justice offered him a cigarette, and this time the prisoner took it. "I brought a visitor, Jim. Do you recognize her?"

Murdock held the lighted cigarette forgotten at his side. His mouth trembled; his eyes brimmed with tears. He stared. "I'm sorry," he whispered. "God, I'm sorry. I thought maybe it was your secretary." His eyes went over her again. "Hello," he said. "Hello, Jane!"

Justice felt like a heel. This was the last thing in the world he had expected. He had wanted to see Joyce Adams deflated. He had wanted her to see the man she was selling out for fifty dollars. Now, Justice knew he had made a mistake. Jim Murdock's vision of freedom had been a dream of a girl named Jane Shaw. Ten years

had erased the truth from his mind. He had dreamed of an ideal, of a girl who waited outside these walls. He hadn't really believed in it, but it had persisted, and he had built an ideal. God help me, Justice thought, *this girl fits that ideal.*

A grifter—a cheap little cheat. Anything for fifty dollars. But to this lonely man, she looked like an angel. "Damn it," Justice told himself angrily, "she *does* look something like an angel. A human angel, with faults, with unhappiness buried deep in her knowing eyes."

Well, he'd have to explode that myth as soon as possible. If Murdock got out and learned what this woman really was—

Joyce Adams didn't look too happy. Her underlip was quivering and she was biting down on it. She forced herself to look up at last, to meet the hungry eyes across the table.

"Hello, Jim." Her voice was low. "It's good to see you."

"Good?" Murdock swallowed. "My God, Jane, it's wonderful!"

Justice cleared his throat. "I'm sorry to cut this short," he said, his voice husky. "But we've got a lot to talk about. Why don't you say good-bye and then wait in the hall, Jane?"

She stood up. "Good-by, Jim." Her shoulders were stooped as she started from the room. Murdock's eyes followed her.

"Does she look like Jane Shaw?" Justice demanded.

"Not as I remember her," Murdock said. "She's prettier now—much prettier."

"That's because she isn't Jane Shaw," Justice said flatly.

Murdock stared at him. The old bitterness moved back into his eyes; the lines deepened around the corners of his mouth like an avalanche of despair. "Do you enjoy games like this, Justice?"

"I didn't expect you to think she was Jane Shaw. You told me you didn't know the name."

"I didn't want to drag her into it. I thought maybe she was married and I had no right."

"She is married, Jim—happily. That's all past. This girl was hired to interest me in your case. I was trying to show her what heartless thugs had hired her. They don't care about you, but they want you out. They want to use you—probably in a political fight. I wanted her to see what hell you'd been through. I hoped that might soften her up so she'd tell me who hired her and why. Jim, *I'm trying to get you out of here.*"

Hope flickered in Murdock's eyes. "When?" he whispered. His hands began to shake. "When?"

"As soon as I can get a hearing. I have proof that you were framed: The

report of the doctor who attended Jennie Platt. A witness who heard Earl Thompson, the State's Attorney, when he planned to frame you. And I know why."

"This is no time to kid me."

"I'm not. You worked for the Sur-Life Drug Company. You made somebody in a narcotics syndicate mad. They wanted to kill you. Why, Jim?"

Murdock looked startled, frightened. He clasped his hands and that seemed to lock his lips.

"Why, Jim?" Justice persisted.

"Because they found out I knew. The Sur-Life Company was controlled by a narcotics syndicate. They were selling narcotics to dummy purchasers. To protect myself, I took some of the statements listing the dummy purchasers and put them in a safe-deposit box. I should have told a lawyer about it, but I didn't. I found out Earl Thompson was in the pay of the syndicate. I was too dangerous to be loose. So they framed me." His eyes were bleak. "Thompson decided to put me away forever, and that's what he's done."

"Up to now, yes," Justice said. "But he hasn't won. You've been put through hell by Thompson and his gang. Ten years is a long time and I won't try to minimize that. But it isn't forever, Jim."

Murdock struggled with his emotions. "Ten years, eighty-seven thousand hours. That is forever, Mr. Justice!"

## Chapter Fourteen

JUDGE MATTHEW HARDISON shook his head. "I have read your brief very carefully," he said. "You have made an eloquent plea and you have brought out a few points in favor of your client. But it is my opinion that there is no showing on the face of the petition to justify the issuance of a writ of habeas corpus."

Justice stared at him. "If it pleases Your Honor, the evidence of the hospital record is sufficient proof of James Murdock's innocence. The report of the examining physician plainly indicates that there was no sign of assault."

"That alone cannot outweigh the trial," the judge replied. "It may well have been the result of inconclusive examination. A young doctor—quite possibly hurried or careless. We cannot free a man convicted by a jury simply on the strength of a piece of paper that you dug up ten years later."

"The very fact that it has not come to light until now," Justice replied, "seems ample ground for court action. It should have been brought forward ten years ago."

"That was up to the court in which the case was tried," Judge Hardison

said. "There may have been many reasons why the document was not admitted as relevant evidence. I cannot sit as an appeals court."

"If the court please," Justice said, trying to control the anger that flared inside him, "I believe that Dr. Paul Jamieson would not agree with you."

"Jamieson? A very good friend of mine—a respected physician."

"He wrote the hospital report that is the basis of my petition. He is the doctor who examined Jennie Platt. He is the doctor who failed to find any evidence of assault." Justice knew that he was wasting his time. He knew that Judge Hardison was a mountebank who owed his political fortunes to Earl Thompson. But he wanted to get it all in the record.

"Jamieson wrote it ten years ago," the judge said, brushing his hand at an imaginary stray hair. "Undoubtedly, he has learned a great deal since then."

Justice shrugged. "Your Honor has made up his mind?"

"Yes, your petition is denied."

"Thank you," Justice said, bowing. "I have now exhausted my remedies in the State courts. I have no choice but to take this to Federal court. There, due process means something."

"Suit yourself," Judge Hardison snapped, dismissing the lawyer with an impatient gesture.

WHEN Helen Ray came into Justice's office, she carried a newspaper. "Did you see this?" she demanded.

Justice took the paper and read the editorial she pointed out. It deplored the publicity-seeking lawyer who insisted on smearing the good names of some of the State's finest men by digging up an old case that could be nothing more than a political football. It was apparent, the editorial concluded, that this was a desperate effort, undoubtedly inspired by the opposition, to cloud the reputation of the statesman Earl Thompson.

Justice put the paper down and grinned at Helen. "At last," he said, "I have been exposed in my true light."

"That's not all," Helen retorted. "Weaver, the president of Miravel, called at thirty-minute intervals all day yesterday, and finally left a message. He said to tell you that he personally doesn't give a damn what you do. But some very good friends of his have suggested that you're off the beam on this Murdock case. He hopes you'll drop the whole thing as a personal favor to him."

"Did you tell him to go to hell?"

"I did not. Miravel happens to be one of our best clients."

"Sure. Millard Weaver gets into more trouble than all the rest of our clients combined. You tell him to



keep on making Miravel and leave me alone. Or else, they can throw him in the clink the next time he gets in a jam."

"I won't tell him anything of the sort," Helen replied. "We've had dozens of calls on this case. Many of them are from men who are above reproach. Peter, you must be wrong—you've got to be wrong. Otherwise, why would so many influential people be saying so?"

"Politics, baby—something that I don't care a damn about. If Murdock was guilty and I was defending him, you wouldn't hear a word. Nobody would care. Sure, they care now. They don't want him free."

"That's ridiculous. All the men who've called *couldn't* have an interest in Jim Murdock. Especially Millard Weaver of Miravel. He didn't even remember the boy's name; he said it was the assault case. He said that kind of man should be boiled in oil."

"Maybe Millard himself has no interest in Murdock," Justice said. "But his political friends do. Even though Millard is a big success in business, he is easily swayed. Besides, he thinks he has a monopoly on getting into trouble. And he thinks I have nothing to do but get him out of it. Get him off my neck, Helen." . . .

Justice decided to serve the subpoenas himself: He didn't want to risk a bailiff's being bought off. They had been prepared by Eileen Ross, who laid them on his desk. He glanced at the morning paper while he waited for Monk. It was long past Monk's usual starting-time and he hadn't shown up.

The lawyer opened the intercom to Helen's office and called to her. There was no answer. Puzzled, he rang for Miss Ross.

"Have you seen Monk or Miss Ray this morning?" he asked.

"No, Mr. Justice," the girl replied. "Neither of them has come in yet."

Justice looked at his watch. "I can't wait all day," he muttered. He scribbled a note for Monk, and told Miss Ross to give it to him, then got his hat and left the office.

He picked up the car and drove to the Gilbert farm. The farmer's wife answered the doorbell.

"Mr. Gilbert didn't come home last night," she said. "I don't know what happened to him."

"Do you mean he left town to avoid a subpoena?"

"I don't know what happened to him, I tell you," the woman replied, tears edging her voice. "I'm worried sick."

"Have you notified the police?"

"Yes. I called them last night when he hadn't got home by midnight. They checked all over—the bus and

railroad stations in Weston and Chicago, the airport—everywhere. They couldn't find a trace of him."

"He knew I was going to ask him to testify," Justice said.

"Yes, I know, and he didn't feel too good about that. But I'm sure he didn't run off." She wiped a handkerchief over her face. "Oh, Mr. Justice, do you suppose that—that gang has done something to him?"

"I doubt it," Justice replied. Then grimly: "If they have, I'll find out. I'll get somebody on it right away."

From a pay phone in Weston, he called the bookie where Al Montavani was employed. "Look, Al," he said. "I need help. Can you get away?"

"Any time, for you, Mr. Justice," Al replied. "What's cooking?"

"A man named Cain Gilbert has disappeared. I'm pretty sure Thompson's mob has got him."

"Maybe they dumped him in a ditch," Montavani suggested.

"I don't think so. If his body had been found, we would have heard about it. Besides, Thompson knows the heat is on. He doesn't want a killing on the eve of election—especially a gang killing."

"You want me to find him, Mr. Justice?"

"Yes. You know your way around. If they've snatched him, somebody will know about it."

"How soon do you want him?"

"I need him tomorrow, Al. I want him in Federal court."

"Leave it to me," Al said confidently. "If the mob snatched him, I'll find him. I know every hood in the Middle West."

Justice left the phone booth and drove to the building that housed the offices of Dr. Paul Jamieson. The receptionist recognized him, and sum-



"I brought a visitor, Jim," Justice said. "Do you recognize her?" Murdock's mouth trembled. His eyes brimmed with tears. He stared. "I'm sorry," he whispered. "God, I'm sorry—Jane!"

moned the office nurse. A worried expression outweighed her obvious annoyance at seeing Justice.

"Yes?" she asked frigidly.

"I would like to see Dr. Jamieson."

"So would I," she replied.

"You mean he isn't here?"

"No, and he hasn't been all day.

He isn't at his home, either. All I know is, he called last night and canceled all his appointments for the next two days."

Unconvinced, Justice took a seat in the reception-room. A woman came in brusquely and called to the office nurse as the latter turned to go back into Dr. Jamieson's office. The newcomer was well dressed and slightly plump.

"Just a moment, young lady," she said to the nurse. "I want to see Dr. Jamieson and I don't intend to be put off as I was this morning."

"I'm awfully sorry, Mrs. Drake," the nurse said, "but Dr. Jamieson hasn't been in all day. I don't know what's happened to him."

"Well, call up his home and find out what is the matter."

"I have called, many times," the nurse said. "There's no answer."

Justice got up, convinced now that the nurse had been telling the truth. The disappearance of both Cain Gilbert and Dr. Jamieson on the same day was too much of a coincidence. It seemed certain that, if they hadn't been kidnaped, Thompson's forces had at least induced them to drop out of sight until after the hearing was over. Only some sort of compulsion would lead Dr. Jamieson to cancel appointments with wealthy patients without some sort of excuse.

At another public phone, Justice called Fred Taylor. The little hoodlum listened attentively, then said: "I always wanted to be a private eye, Mr. Justice. I'll track down the doc for you. You go on to court and I'll have him there."

## Chapter Fifteen

THE FEDERAL COURTROOM of Judge Richard T. Winston was crowded. Every seat and all available standing-room had been taken long before the time for court to convene.

James Murdock sat at a court table. On either side of him was a Stateville guard. Murdock's expression was that of a man who has been thoroughly disillusioned. He maintained a sullen silence; he showed no disposition to warm up to Justice.

Across the counsel table sat Sam Barrows, Assistant Attorney General, appearing for the respondent, the People of the State of Illinois. He glanced at the morose prisoner with obvious pleasure.

"Where's Thompson?" Justice inquired.

"He won't be here," Barrows replied. "He's too busy with his campaign."

"Doesn't he want to defend himself against the charges I'm going to make?"

"He isn't worried," Barrows replied airily. "After all, he did his duty when Murdock was convicted. He feels he doesn't have to defend that."

Judge Winston came from his chambers and took his place on the bench. The clerk called the court to order.

"Case No. 51-H-4432," the clerk said. "People of the State of Illinois, *ex rel* James Murdock versus Massey."

Justice stood up and the courtroom stirred as spectators craned their necks for a better view. "The relator, James Murdock, was convicted some ten years ago and sentenced to a life term for an alleged assault that occurred in Weston, Illinois.

"The only witness against the relator was a spinster named Jennie Platt, at that time age 49. We will show at the time he was arrested, the police denied him all his constitutional rights, even depriving him of the right to talk to an attorney—"

"I object, if Your Honor please," Barrows said in a thundering baritone. "This is a hearing on whether Murdock is illegally detained. Questions relating to his arrest are immaterial."

"I believe the court would like to know the background," Justice said, "and especially the motive."

"That's right. Proceed."

"I object, if the court please," Barrows said stubbornly.

"All right," said Judge Winston. "I'll keep that in mind. Go ahead, Mr. Justice."

"We will show that James Murdock was convicted of a crime that was never committed. We will show that the State failed to bring forward medical evidence which was then available—and which will be introduced in this hearing—that would have cleared James Murdock of the alleged crime. We will show that the failure of the prosecution to bring forth this evidence shows connivance—"

Barrows was on his feet, his face livid. "I object, Your Honor! The prosecutor is not on trial. The prosecutor was an honorable man who undoubtedly will be the next Governor of this great State—"

"Overruled," Judge Winston said. "Mr. Barrows, I hope you will remember that this is a court of law and not a public forum for political speeches. Continue, Mr. Justice."

"I accept my learned friend's challenge," Justice said. "The prosecutor is on trial—ethically, at least, if not legally. I intend to show that Mur-

dock was utterly innocent of any crime. I intend to show that, by the connivance of the prosecutor, evidence of his innocence was suppressed. We deny due process. We will show that Murdock had no previous criminal record, that he had a regular job and a good reputation at the time of his arrest.

"The only thing we can find against him is that he had learned certain incriminating facts which made it dangerous for him to be free. That's why he was framed."

"I object to all of that!" Barrows shouted. "Habeas corpus is not for the purpose of determining the guilt or innocence of the relator, but merely to determine whether he is being illegally restrained. He has been tried before a competent jurisdiction; that cannot be gone into collaterally by habeas corpus."

JUSTICE sensed that the judge was not pleased by the words of the Assistant Attorney General, which in effect advised him what he could do.

"I think," Justice said softly, "that is a matter for Your Honor to decide."

"I shall decide it," Judge Winston snapped. "Mr. Justice, you have witnesses in support of your petition?"

"Several witnesses, Your Honor."

"Go ahead and call them. After I have heard their testimony, I will decide whether it is relevant to this action."

Justice suppressed a grin. The beligerent attitude displayed by Barrows undoubtedly had antagonized the court. He would have free rein to call all his witnesses and question them—if he only knew where the key witnesses were! Maybe they could be found if he had more time. He'd have to stall.

"Thank you, Your Honor," Justice said. "It is not my desire to waste the time of this court or that of my friend, Mr. Barrows. My only desire is to see that justice is done. I hate corruption and I deplore a deliberate miscarriage of justice. My client is penniless and I am working without fee. As a matter of fact, I have incurred considerable expense in this case—"

"The court doesn't question your motive, Mr. Justice. Call your witnesses."

"Very well. I shall call James Murdock."

The prisoner, who had been viewing the proceedings with an attitude of disdain, looked up, startled. He got up when Justice approached and allowed himself to be led to the witness chair. After the usual preliminaries, Justice turned toward him.

"Mr. Murdock, do you recall the exact date when you were taken into custody on the charge of attacking Jennie Platt?"

"Are you kidding?"

"Please answer the question."

"How could I ever forget? It was the 16th of November, 1941."

"Where were you taken?"

"I was taken to the police station, where they beat me up."

Waving his arm wildly, Barrows said: "I object to that!"

"Overruled," the court said. "Go ahead, Mr. Justice."

"Will you tell us what took place then?"

"I was pulled out of the cell and shoved into a room. Then some men came in."

"Who were these men?"

"Sergeant Richards and State's Attorney Thompson."

"What did they say to you?"

"They said they were not going to let me see a lawyer and that they were fixing my bond at \$50,000, which they knew I couldn't make. Thompson said he knew what I was up to, but I better not make any trouble."

"What did you say?"

"I asked Thompson what this was all about and he told me I'd find out soon enough."

"What happened then?"

"I was thrown in the cell again. They didn't give me anything—not even a glass of water. But I was so sick I was glad they just left me alone."

"You said you were beaten up," Justice said. "Will you tell the court just how badly?"

"I was knocked around and kicked, and they beat me on the nose and mouth. I've still got a scar on my mouth." Murdock turned to face the judge and indicated a faint, jagged line on his upper lip.

"Did you get any medical attention?"

"I didn't get anything."

"What about breakfast the next morning? Did they give you anything?"

**M**URDOCK made a wry face. "Yes, they gave me a piece of bologna and a cup of black coffee."

"Then what happened?"

"Richards and Thompson came for me and took me to a hospital. They took me into a room, where this woman, Jennie Platt, lay on a bed."

"How did you know she was Jennie Platt?"

"Thompson told me. I'd never seen her before."

"Go on."

"Thompson asked her if she had ever seen me before. She said no, she had never seen me before in her life. Thompson said, all right, but he would bring me back again."

Barrows had stood all of this that he could. "I object," he said. "I object to everything the witness has said."

"On what grounds?" Judge Winston inquired.

"On the grounds that it is all hearsay."

"I do not understand this as hearsay at all," the judge replied. "Objection overruled."

"Now, Mr. Murdock, tell the court when you next saw Mr. Thompson, the State's Attorney."

"About ten days later. I was taken to his office and this woman, Jennie Platt, was there. He asked her if I was the man. She said, no, she was sure I was not the man."

"Were you taken back to a cell in the police station then?"

"No. I went to court for a preliminary hearing. Thompson told me I better not try to get out on bond. The Judge asked me if I pleaded guilty or not guilty. I told him not guilty, and he asked if I had a lawyer. Thompson answered for me and said I had no lawyer. Thompson then asked the court to appoint one for me."

"And did the court appoint one?"

"Yes. Thompson suggested that a lawyer named Herbert Scott would be a good one for me and the judge appointed him."

"Why didn't you get your own lawyer?"

"They wouldn't let me. They took me to the county jail, and they haven't got any phones in those cells."

"Did the lawyer come to see you in the county jail?"

"Yes, once."

"Did you tell him your story?"

"I tried to, but he wouldn't listen. He said there wasn't anything he could do for me. He said, 'I'll see you in court,' and left."

"Did you see the lawyer again before the trial?"

"No," Murdock replied. "I asked him to come back, but he said he couldn't do anything for me. And believe me, he didn't."

"Where were you at the time the attack was supposed to have taken place?"

"I object to that," Barrows said. "This is not a trial. This is a hearing on habeas corpus."

"Overruled," Judge Winston said. "I want to know all the facts about this case. Proceed, Mr. Justice."

"Answer the question," Justice directed.

"I was in Chicago with my girl friend until 10:30. I heard the woman was attacked about 11 o'clock. I couldn't possibly have got to Weston by that time."

"Did your girl friend furnish an alibi for you?"

"I don't know. I never saw her again until that day in court."

"Did you ask your lawyer to have her testify?"

"Yes. But he wouldn't do it. He said he wasn't going to stick his neck out."

"How many witnesses were there at the trial?"

"Three."

"Who were they?"

"The two cops who arrested me and this woman, Jennie Platt."

"What did Jennie Platt say?"

"She didn't say much. The prosecutor asked her to point out the man that attacked her. She pointed her finger at me and said, 'That fellow there.' Then she left the stand."

"Didn't your lawyer cross-examine her?"

"He didn't do anything, I tell you. He just sat there and told me to keep my trap shut."

**D**ID you take the stand in your own defense?"

"No. They wouldn't let me."

"By 'they,' whom do you mean?"

"My lawyer and the State's Attorney. My lawyer said he wasn't going to call me; and Thompson threatened me. He said if I got up there, a mob would take me out and string me up."

"Were you frightened?"

"Sure, I was. I didn't have a friend in court. I figured by then I would be lucky to get to prison alive."

"How long did the trial last?"

"Twelve minutes."

"That's ridiculous," Barrows injected.

"I think so too," the prisoner retorted. "But that's how long it took to railroad me to Stateville for life."

"What does the court record show, Mr. Barrows?" Judge Winston inquired.

Barrows flushed. "I don't know."

"What about this lawyer, Scott?" asked the judge. "Where is he now?"

"I don't know," Barrows replied. "I haven't been able to find any record of him."

"Do you know, Mr. Justice?"

"No. I've searched for him throughout the country. From all I could learn, he dropped out of sight shortly after the trial."

"That's strange," the judge commented. "Proceed."

"I will now ask you, Mr. Murdock: Did you attack Jennie Platt?"

"No. I never attacked anybody."

"Did you have a police record prior to your arrest?"

"No. I never violated any law, as far as I know."

"Did you have a job?"

"Yes. I was bookkeeper for the Sur-Life Drug Company."

"Is that the same company that is now a prosperous and nationwide chain?"

"So I've heard; I've been in jail all the time and I don't know."

## Chapter Sixteen

"Did you discover certain records in the business of this company that were irregular?"

"Your Honor, I object!" Barrows shouted. "All this is irrelevant. The prisoner's dealings with his employer have absolutely nothing to do with this case. If we go into all the details of this man's personal life, this hearing can drag on for weeks."

"Mr. Justice," the court said. "I am inclined to agree with Mr. Barrows. What is the reason for this line of questioning?"

"I am leading up to a very vital point. I shall show that Mr. Murdock's knowledge led to his being framed and sentenced to life imprisonment, in a sham trial. I shall show that this was possible only through the connivance of the State's Attorney, who was a very powerful man in Weston."

"Those are strong charges, Mr. Justice," Judge Winston said. "I hope you will substantiate them."

"I will," Justice replied.

"I object to this whole thing," Barrows said. "This is a blatant attempt to smear the State's Attorney. I would like to know why this case is brought up at this time. Why did Justice wait until the eve of the election to bring it into court? There can be only one reason. He has been hired by the party opposing Earl

Thompson. He is here to smear Thompson's good name. He knows this man is guilty and he knows he won't be able to prove otherwise."

"Those, too, are strong charges, Mr. Barrows," the court asserted. "On what do you base them?"

"The line of questioning Counsel has embarked on. He is about to make unfounded charges against Thompson. We will have only the words of the prisoner. The charges will be printed in the newspapers. Even though they are later proved false, they will have done a great deal of damage."

Judge Winston rested his chin in his hand and deliberated for several minutes. Finally, he said: "I agree that it is unfair to Mr. Thompson to have false charges against him aired. Do you concur, Mr. Justice?"

"Certainly," Justice replied. "May I inquire how Mr. Barrows knows what testimony is about to be made?"

"I don't know," Barrows protested, red-faced. "But the insinuations—"

Judge Winston rapped with his gavel as a murmur ran through the spectators. Quiet was restored.

"I'll have to think this over," the court said. "It is a very grave question. Please be here promptly at ten o'clock tomorrow morning."

With that, Judge Winston rose and walked rapidly into his chambers.

BY THE FOLLOWING MORNING, Justice had become distinctly alarmed at the continued absence of Helen and Monk. It was unlike them to disappear without at least letting him know their plans, and he admitted to himself that his failure to hear from them, even by a telephone call, had begun to tighten the cold band of fear around his heart.

Almost as distressing was the word from Fred Taylor and Al Montavani. Not only had they heard nothing about Helen and Monk, they'd run into nothing but blind alleys in their search for Gilbert and Dr. Jamieson.

It was with a heavy heart, and yet one lightened perceptibly by the hope that Monk and Helen were working on some phase of the case that was all their own—and which they were prevented from revealing lest there be a delay—that Justice returned to Judge Winston's courtroom promptly at ten o'clock.

The newspapers had hinted at the impending fireworks and disappointed spectators jostled each other in the wide corridor outside. With expressions of awe, they stepped aside and made a path for Peter Justice as he approached. He smiled as several greeted him and squeezed past them to the enclosure reserved for the principals.

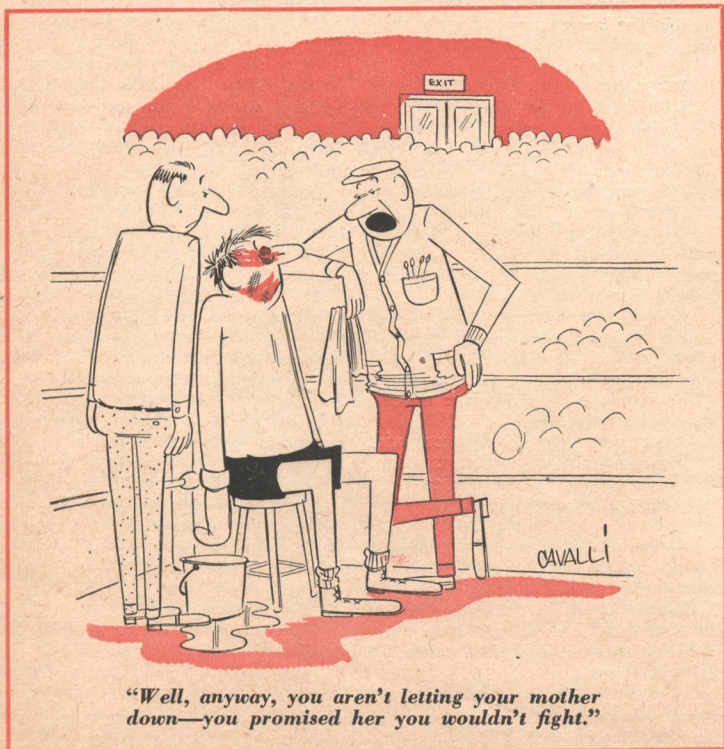
Barrows was already there; he waved airily as Justice sat down at the counsel table. "What," he asked, "are you going to do if Judge Winston rules against you?"

"I don't think he will," Justice replied. "But I'm afraid you'll have to wait and see. Not worried, are you, Sam?"

Barrows didn't answer. There was an excited babble from the spectators as the prisoner was led in by the Stateville guards. He sat down between them, but there was an amazing change in his demeanor. The cynical expression had been erased from his features, and there was now a distinct flicker of hope in his eyes.

A sudden silence swept the courtroom as Judge Winston left his chambers and proceeded to the bench. The clerk went through the usual routine of calling the court to order.

"I have given this case grave consideration since the recess yesterday," the judge said. "I realize it might be unfair to Earl Thompson to air unsubstantiated charges. On the other hand, I want to see this prisoner have his day in court—and I am not at all certain that he did have his day in court when he was convicted. Therefore, he will be allowed to answer the questions.



*"Well, anyway, you aren't letting your mother down—you promised her you wouldn't fight."*

"But I warn you, Mr. Justice," Judge Winston added sternly, "that if you use the testimony of this witness for political purposes, you may have to face serious consequences. Is that understood?"

"It is quite agreeable with me, Your Honor," Justice replied amiably.

"It isn't agreeable to me," Sam Barrows said. "I still object. I want that to go in the record."

"All right," Judge Winston said. "The witness will testify, but your objection will be recorded. Call the witness."

Jim Murdock took the stand and was sworn.

"I will repeat the question that went unanswered yesterday," Justice said. "Did you discover certain records of the Sur-Life Drug Company that were highly irregular?"

"Yes. They were statements of large narcotics sales to other drugstores."

"What was irregular about that?" "Those drugstores didn't exist; they were all dummies."

"What did you do about it?" Justice asked.

"I mentioned it to the manager. He looked flustered and then told me it was none of my business."

"Did you notice any change in the attitude of your employer after that?"

"Yes. For one thing, I was watched. I realized I had made a mistake. I knew that I had stumbled on information that was dangerous."

"Do you think this is the reason you were railroaded to prison on a trumped-up charge?"

"I'm sure of it." Barrows leaped to his feet, and his face was stormy. "I object to that," he shouted. "No proof has been offered to this court that the charges were trumped up! We have only the word of this prisoner."

"I will sustain your objection," Judge Winston said. "Mr. Justice, please confine your questions to fact."

Justice said to Murdock: "That is all." Then he waved his hand to Barrows.

**B**ARROWS bowed in mock deference to Justice, then faced the witness. "You say you've been in Stateville for over ten years, Mr. Murdock?"

"Yes." "And you say you are innocent?" "I certainly am."

Barrows smiled. "Isn't it true, Mr. Murdock," he continued, with exaggerated politeness, "that every one of the five thousand prisoners in Stateville is innocent?"

"A hell of a lot of 'em are," Murdock flared. "I'm not the only one who was railroaded."

"And if each of those prisoners was brought into court," Barrows con-

tinued, "wouldn't he swear he was innocent, that he had been framed?" "You'll have to ask them," Murdock retorted.

"Yet you come into this court, convicted of a serious crime, and expect us to believe that you're innocent because you say you are?"

"I don't expect anything. I've been kicked around so much, I don't expect a thing."

"You said that a lawyer was appointed to represent you. Is that right?"

"That's right." "Did you tell the lawyer what you have told this court?"

"I tried to, but he wouldn't listen to me."

"You said that Jennie Platt saw you twice before you went to trial, didn't you?"

"Yes, but she couldn't identify me."

"But she identified you at the trial?"

"Yes."

"Your lawyer was with you at the trial?"

"Yes, he sat beside me."

"Did you tell him that Jennie Platt had failed to identify you on two previous occasions?"

"I did."

"What did he say?"

"He said nobody would believe it."

"Did he put you on the stand in your own defense?"

"No. Thompson told me I couldn't take the stand. My lawyer refused to let me testify."

"Did you tell him you were dissatisfied with his services?"

"I sure did. And he said, 'Well, I got the case and you're stuck with me.'"

"Did he make a motion for a new trial?"

"He didn't do anything. He just sat there until the judge sentenced me. Then he got out of there as fast as he could."

"You have accused State's Attorney Thompson of framing you," Barrows said. "Can you give me any good reason why he should?"

"No," Murdock replied, "except he must have been getting a payoff from the narcotics gang."

"You know of the existence of this alleged narcotics gang?"

"There must have been one."

"You can name its members?" Barrows pressed.

"No, but—"

"Please answer the questions," Barrows said curtly. "You admit that the existence of this gang was pure supposition on your part?"

"Yes."

"You say that you discovered statements for narcotics sales made out to dummy drugstores?"

"Yes."

"Where are those statements now?"

"I don't know," Murdock replied with a twisted grin. "The warden wouldn't let me go look for them."

"Isn't it true they never existed?"

"No, it's not true."

"How did you determine that the drugstores didn't exist?"

"I checked in the register of drugstores. They were not listed."

"You made no other check?"

"No, they were all over the country."

"But it is quite possible, isn't it, that the drugstores could have been established after the register was assembled?"

"Yes, it's possible."

"In other words, Mr. Murdock, you admit you don't know whether those statements you tell about were legitimate or not? You admit that you don't know there was a narcotics gang in existence, but just think so. You admit that you only suspect Earl Thompson was friendly to a narcotics gang that you don't know existed. And you expect this court to believe all this supposition was the cause of your being sent to prison. You expect the court to take your word for everything, pat you on the back, tell you to be a good boy, and release you. Is that right?"

Murdock didn't answer. Barrows smiled, bowed elaborately and said: "That is all."

**J**USTICE led Jim Murdock back to his seat, squeezed his arm reassuringly, and called the next witness, who identified himself as Cass O'Conner. He said he was the official court reporter of the Circuit Court at Weston, Illinois.

"How long have you been official court reporter?" Justice asked.

"About twelve years."

"It is your duty to make an exact record of the proceedings in each case tried in the Circuit Court at Weston?"

"That's right."

"James Murdock was tried on February 7, 1942. Were you court reporter on that date?"

"I was."

"Do you recall the trial of James Murdock?"

"I remember that I made a record of the proceedings. I don't recall what happened."

"It is your official duty to keep a file of these records, is it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you please let the court see your transcript of the proceedings on that occasion?"

O'Connor flushed. "I can't," he said. "I don't know what happened to them."

"Did you search all your files?"

"Yes, I spent several days going through the records. The file for February 7th, 1942, is missing."

"Did you dispose of that file yourself, Mr. O'Connor?"

"No," the witness said. "I can't understand why it isn't there."

"Does anyone else have access to your records, Mr. O'Connor?"

"Well, not officially. But if any authorized person wants to see them, I'm obliged to show them or a certified transcript."

"Who is an authorized person?"

"A lawyer for the defendant is entitled to a certified copy," O'Connor said. "So is the State's Attorney."

"Do you actually make copies for the State's Attorney?"

"Sometimes I do. Usually, though, when the State's Attorney wants to see the files, I give him free access."

"Did the State's Attorney take the file for February 7th, 1942?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"But he could have taken it, if he had wanted to, couldn't he?" Justice pressed.

"Yes, I suppose so."

"That is all," Justice told the witness. Then he addressed the Court: "I submit, Your Honor, that the suppression of the record of James Murdock's trial is ample proof that he was denied due process."

"It's a point in your favor," Judge Winston conceded. "But there is no definite proof that the record was suppressed. Mr. Barrows, do you want to cross-examine?"

"I CERTAINLY do," Barrows replied, standing up to face the witness. "Mr. O'Connor, you say you have been the official court reporter for twelve years. During that time have you ever lost any other records?"

"Yes, sir, a few."

"Was the loss due, shall we say, to human error?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you ever been accused before of suppressing records?"

Justice stood up. "I object to that, Your Honor. The witness has not been accused of suppressing the record."

"Sustained," Judge Winston said. "Go ahead, Mr. Barrows."

"I'll rephrase the question: Have you ever been accused of suppressing records, Mr. O'Connor?"

"Never."

"Did you suppress the record of the trial of James Murdock?"

"No, sir."

"Did the State's Attorney suppress it?"

"I don't know."

"Did you ever see him leaving your office with any of your records?"

"None except those I handed to him."

"Do you have any reason to believe that he stole into your office, snatched this record, and took it away without your knowledge or consent?"

"No, sir."

"Mr. O'Connor, you've testified that you made a transcript of the proceedings in the trial of James Murdock, but that you don't recall any of the details. Do you ever recall any of the details of any of the cases you report?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you tell me why you recall some cases, but don't remember others?"

"Yes. I generally remember a case when something unusual happens."

BARROWS grinned triumphantly.

"Exactly," he said. "The fact you fail to recall the case of James Murdock indicates that there was nothing unusual about it, does it not?"

"I would say so. Yes."

"From your experience as a court reporter, you know when a defendant is denied due process, don't you?"

"Yes, sir, I think so."

"And if you had thought that James Murdock was being denied any of his rights, you would have remembered the case?"

"I'm sure I would."

"Thank you, Mr. O'Connor. That is all."

Barrows grinned maliciously at Justice and sauntered back to his seat at the counsel table. The witness stepped down from the stand and Judge Winston looked inquiringly at Justice.

"You may call your next witness, Mr. Justice," the court said.

Justice stood up. "Your Honor," he said, "I have two more witnesses. But they have been detained and are not in court. Inasmuch as it is near the time for a recess, I'd like to ask that the hearing be put over until tomorrow morning."

"I object to this delay," Barrows retorted. "Your Honor, Counsel is stalling. He is wasting the time of the court. He is wasting my time. I have many other important cases that demand my attention. I had expected to return to Springfield tonight. I move that the court dismiss this man's petition."

"I'll consider your motion, Mr. Barrows," Judge Winston said, glancing at the clock. "However, it is near the time for a recess. Mr. Justice, it does appear that you are unduly prolonging this hearing. This court has not the time for that. The docket is crowded and we must get on to other business. Have your witnesses here tomorrow morning promptly at ten, or I shall be forced to dismiss your motion."

SAM BARROWS GLARED suspiciously at Justice as he strode into court with Cain Gilbert next day, and Justice couldn't restrain his glance of triumph at the State's Attorney.

It had been obvious, of course! Where else to hide a witness but at Earl Thompson's summer place on the Gilbert property? It had taken but two hours of Justice's time to drive there the night before, surprise Gilbert in his hiding-place, and bring him to town. And now, if Helen and Monk were doing what he'd prayed they were doing—

Justice walked with a jaunty step, and there was a wide grin on his face as he greeted the Assistant Attorney General. He led Gilbert to the bench reserved for witnesses, then took his own seat at the counsel table.

"What trickery are you up to now, Justice?" Barrows demanded.

"Mr. Barrows," Justice replied, "I never resort to trickery."

"Who's the hayseed character?"

"A witness."

Barrows flushed angrily and turned to face the bench. Judge Winston came in and sat down; he banged his gavel and the clerk went through his routine.

"Mr. Justice," the judge said, "do you have your witnesses?"

"Yes, Your Honor. I'd like to call Cain Gilbert."

With faltering steps, the big farmer walked to the witness chair. Obviously ill at ease, he stammered as he repeated the oath. Then he sat down and clasped his hands nervously in his lap. In response to the lawyer's questions, he identified himself and said that he was a farmer by occupation.

Justice began:

"Mr. Gilbert, do you own a cabin in a heavily wooded section northwest of your home?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you occupy this yourself?"

"No, sir. I rent it."

"To whom do you rent it?"

"It's been leased to Earl Thompson for the last twelve years."

Barrows was on his feet, waving his hands. "I object," he shouted. "The real-estate dealings of the witness have no bearing on this case. I'd like to remind Your Honor that this is a hearing on a motion for a writ of habeas corpus, to determine whether or not a prisoner is being illegally restrained."

"Your objection would be valid," Judge Winston said, "in a criminal trial. But I must point out again, Mr. Barrows, that the usual rules of evidence do not apply to this hearing. What is admissible is a matter that is entirely for the court to decide. If



"Yes," O'Connor said, "I spent several days going through the records. The file for February 7th, 1942, is missing." Justice pressed him: "Did you dispose of that file yourself, Mr. O'Connor?" O'Connor flushed. "No," he said. "I can't understand why it isn't with the other files."

the witness' business dealings have a bearing on the motion, I will hear his testimony. Mr. Justice, does the testimony of this witness directly concern the relator, James Murdock, and his subsequent confinement?"

"It does, Your Honor," Justice replied. "If you will hear it through, I think you will agree."

"Very well. Go ahead."

"Mr. Gilbert," Justice said, "for what purpose did you rent your resort to Mr. Thompson?"

"He said he wanted it for a summer place," the witness replied. "But he kept it the year round."

"Did Mr. Thompson make any additions to the property?"

"Yes, sir. He put up a heavy iron gate. He also ran a fence around it, with a lot of barbed wire."

"Did he tell you his reason for doing this?"

"He said he wanted to keep people from trespassing."

"Did you suspect that was not his real purpose?"

"I am compelled to object," Barrows said. "Conjecture by the witness can have no possible bearing on this action."

"Sustained," Judge Winston ruled. "Mr. Gilbert," Justice asked, "did you see others going to this resort?"

"Well, a few," Gilbert admitted.

"There might have been more, but I

figured it wasn't none of my business, so I didn't keep track."

"Who were these visitors?"

"I didn't know 'em."

"Were you at a meeting in this cabin in the latter part of November, 1941?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who was there?"

"Earl Thompson and three or four other fellows."

"What was the reason for the meeting?"

"I don't know."

"You heard some of their conversation, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"What were they talking about?"

"About this young fellow, Jim Murdock, that had been arrested for attacking a woman."

"What did the State's Attorney, Earl Thompson, say?"

"I didn't hear everything he said," Gilbert replied, glancing at Barrows and moving uncomfortably in the chair. "But I did hear Mr. Thompson say that it was all set, that Murdock was going to be sent up to Stateville for life, and he wouldn't get in anybody's way any more."

"Who were the other men?"

"I don't rightly know. They were strangers."

"Isn't it true," Justice pressed, "that they were the leaders of a syndicate dealing in narcotics?"

"Maybe so," Gilbert replied. "I ain't sure."

"Isn't it true that they used this remote, inaccessible cabin, hidden in a dense wood, as a hideout and as a base of operations for distributing narcotics?"

"I don't know. I was curious, but I didn't ask no questions. I'm a mighty good one at minding my own business."

"Thank you, Mr. Gilbert. That will be all."

**B**ARROWS had listened with obvious enjoyment to Gilbert's floundering and evasive answers. Now, he got up and approached the witness with exaggerated friendliness.

"Mr. Gilbert," he said, "I don't intend to waste a lot of your time with useless questions. But I shall ask you to put the record straight. Is it unusual for people to rent lodges in the forest the year round?"

"No, sir, I guess it ain't unusual at all."

"Referring to the property that you lease to Mr. Thompson, can you tell me how large it is?"

"Yes, of course—it's about one hundred acres."

"Is there a stream of any kind?"

"Yes, there's a pond and a crick running off it."

"How is the fishing in this creek?"

"Pretty good, so I hear."

"And do ducks and other waterfowl ever gather on the pond?"

"Yes, sir, there's flocks of 'em in season."

"In other words, your property would be an ideal location for a hunting and fishing lodge?"

"Yes, sir."

"Isn't that, in fact, what Mr. Thompson maintains it for?"

"Might be," Gilbert replied, brightening at the prospect that Barrows was leading him out of an uncomfortable situation.

"And the people who visited him—were they not businessmen bent on hunting or fishing expeditions?"

"Yes, sir, very likely," Gilbert said. "I seen some of 'em carrying shotguns and rifles."

"Now, Mr. Gilbert, I refer to this conversation about James Murdock that you overheard. Do you remember Mr. Thompson's exact words?"

"No, sir, I don't."

"Let me suggest what happened. These friends of Mr. Thompson, at his lodge for a weekend of hunting, were outraged at the thought of Murdock's attacking a middle-aged woman. They were discussing the case, as honest citizens do everywhere. They asked the State's Attorney what he planned to do about it. He told them that he would convict Murdock, who would be sent to the penitentiary for life. Is that substantially what you heard?"

"Yes, sir, just about."

"Isn't it the duty of the State's Attorney to try to convict a man charged with a crime?"

"Yes, sir, it is."

"As a matter of fact, Earl Thompson promised his friends that he, as the county's prosecutor, would do his duty. Isn't that true?"

"Yes, sir, that's right."

Barrows smiled. "You have testified that Mr. Thompson put up a strong fence to keep out intruders. Isn't it true, Mr. Gilbert, that as soon as the hunting or fishing season opens, hundreds of people from the city invade any preserve that is accessible?"

"That's right. Them city fellows swarm in and overrun your property if you don't do something to keep 'em out."

"Then it was perfectly natural for Mr. Thompson to seek some sort of protection against these strangers?"

"I would if I was him."

"Thank you, Mr. Gilbert. That is all."

Justice rose, sauntered over to stand in front of the witness. "Mr. Gilbert, do you recall that I visited your home a few weeks ago?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you remember our conversation?"

"I recollect we talked, Mr. Justice," Gilbert replied. "But if you was to ask me what we said, I couldn't for the life of me tell you what it was."

"Do you recall the purpose of my visit?"

"Well, sir," Gilbert said, "that is something I never did get straight. You barged into my place without being asked and Ma fixed us a pot of coffee. Maybe that was what you come for."

"Do you remember that we discussed narcotics?" Justice pressed.

"You mentioned a couple of fellows who worked in a drugstore," Gilbert replied. "I never did catch on to just exactly what you was talking about."

"You mean you refuse to admit anything about our conversation?"

"No, sir," Gilbert said blandly. "I ain't refusing anything. I just don't understand them things."

Justice realized that he would never be able to trap the stubborn farmer. "That is all," he said.

Judge Winston looked down at Justice. "Do you have anything else to offer?"

Justice opened his briefcase. "I would like to offer this, Your Honor." He held up a sheet of heavy paper, yellow with age.

"What is it?" Judge Winston asked.

"It is the record of Jennie Platt's brief stay in the Weston General Hospital. May I read it?"

"Go ahead."

*"Weston General Hospital, Case No. 6889, Doctor Jamieson. Patient's name: Miss Jennie Platt. Age: 49. Date: November 16, 1941. Diagnosis: Accidental fall. Present illness: Contusion over eye, nose, mouth and throat. Signed, Jamieson."*

Justice handed the record to the judge.

"Where did you get this?" Judge Winston asked.

"I found it after a long search of the old records of Weston General Hospital," Justice replied. "It is conclusive proof that Jennie Platt was not the victim of an assault. It proves, beyond doubt, that James Murdock was convicted for a crime that was never committed."

## Chapter Eighteen

**T**HERE WAS A BUZZ of excited comment from the spectators, and Judge Winston banged several times with his gavel. "There will be no more outbursts from the spectators," he said sternly, "or I will have the courtroom cleared."

The uproar quickly subsided.

"Your Honor," Barrows said, "may I examine that document?"

"Yes, of course." The judge handed it to the Assistant Attorney General.

Barrow studied it for several minutes. "This doesn't prove anything," he asserted, "except that Jennie Platt was in the hospital. It certainly doesn't prove she wasn't assaulted."

"It does, if this record is complete," Judge Winston said. "However, it seems quite possible that there was a further examination to substantiate the woman's claim. Do you have any further record, Mr. Justice?"

"No, Your Honor, that was all I could find," Justice replied. "But it is my understanding that there is only one chart for each admission. If there had been a further examination, it would have been entered on this record."



"We have only Counsel's word for that, Your Honor," Barrows argued. "Who is this Doctor Jamieson?"

"Dr. Paul Jamieson," Justice replied. "He is now one of the most eminent physicians in Weston."

"Then why isn't he here to back up your statement?" Barrows demanded.

"He is," stated a clear feminine voice from the rear of the courtroom.

All eyes turned to the rear. Helen Ray was walking rapidly down the aisle between the seats. She was followed by Dr. Paul Jamieson. Monk Saunders brought up the rear.

"Order!" shouted the judge, but he was as curious as any of the spectators as the procession reached the enclosure. Monk indicated a chair and Dr. Jamieson sat down.

Justice wanted to embrace Helen, but he restrained himself and shook her hand. Then he turned to the judge. "Your Honor, I would like to introduce my associate, Miss Helen Ray."

Judge Winston nodded. "You have another witness, Mr. Justice?"

"Yes. I will now call Dr. Paul Jamieson."

As Dr. Jamieson walked to the stand, Barrows muttered: "Dramatics! You have to play to the grandstand, don't you, Justice?"

Justice smiled, bowed slightly to Barrows and faced the witness, who had been sworn. "Dr. Jamieson," he asked, "were you attached to any hospital on November 16, 1941?"

"Yes, I was on the staff of Weston General Hospital."

"On the evening of November 16, 1941, did you have occasion to see and examine Jennie Platt?"

"I did."

"Tell us the circumstances under which you examined her and how you came to be at the hospital."

"I was called to the hospital to see her. She was in the examining-room and I asked the nurse to remove her clothing," Dr. Jamieson said. "The nurse said she claimed she had been assaulted."

"I object to that," Barrows said.

"Objection overruled. Go ahead."

"What did your examination reveal?" Justice asked.

"There were bruises and discolorations on her face and neck."

"Did you examine her for evidence of criminal assault?"

"I did, but I found no evidence of that at all."

"Was her clothing disarrayed in any way?"

"No, it was not."

"Did you report your findings to the police?"

"I did."

"Were you ever questioned by the State's Attorney about it?"

"No."

"Did you testify at the trial of James Murdock?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I was not asked to testify."

"Did you know that he had been convicted of the crime?"

"Not until after he had been sent to the penitentiary."

"Would you say that Jennie Platt was not criminally assaulted?"

"Definitely not."

"Thank you, Dr. Jamieson. That is all."

Barrows got up to cross-examine, but his cocky air had disappeared completely.

"Dr. Jamieson, you said you learned that James Murdock had been convicted of a crime that you say was never committed. Is that right?"

"That is right."

"What did you do about it?"

"I went to the State's Attorney and told him it was all a mistake. He said he would look into it and for me not to worry. I asked him about it later and he said there wasn't anything that he could do. I had to let it drop."

"You said that you examined Jennie Platt, and determined that she hadn't been attacked. How did you decide that?"

"There are standard medical procedures for such an examination," Dr. Jamieson said.

"Dr. Jamieson," asked Judge Winston, "did you see Jennie Platt again after you examined her?"

"Yes. I was on a panel that examined her for a mental condition. That was in March, 1942."

"What was the result of this examination?"

"She was committed to a mental institution."

"Did her condition have anything to do with the accidental fall that had caused her to be taken to the hospital in November of 1941?"

"Yes. She suffered lapses and sometimes went into a coma. I believe she fell during one of these attacks."

"Is it your opinion that her mental condition led her to claim she had been assaulted?"

"There is no question about it."

"Thank you, Dr. Jamieson. That will be all."



"How'd I know he'd grab for it?"

Sam Barrows lighted a cigarette and glared across at Justice. Then he stalked out of the courtroom and began pacing the corridor outside. Finally he walked to the end of the hall and entered a telephone booth.

JUSTICE remained at the counsel table with Helen, Monk and Dr. Jamieson.

"I feel clean," Jamieson said. "As if I'd just had a bath. I feel as if I'd just been freed from a long imprisonment. Freed of a shackle that has bound me for ten years."

"I think I understand how you feel," Justice said. "Anyhow, you certainly appeared at the right moment." He turned to Helen. "Just how did you manage to walk in at the precise instant I needed you?"

"We didn't," Helen replied. "We had been in the courtroom all morning."

"Well, why didn't you get in touch with me? Where have you been all this time?"

"We didn't have a chance to call you, boss," Monk said.

"I'm listening," Justice said.

"I'll start at the beginning," Helen said. "The night before you were to serve the subpoenas, I got to thinking that your key witness might disappear before you could get to him. I tried to phone you and got no answer. Then I called Monk. He agreed with me and we decided to keep an eye on Dr. Jamieson.

"We waited near his home all night. The next morning, he put his family in his car and started driving north. We followed him all the way to a resort in the north woods. We stopped at the same lodge and as soon as I had an opportunity, I talked to Dr. Jamieson. I didn't dare call you, Peter. After all, your wires have been tapped before."

"She didn't quite sell me on the idea of testifying," the doctor observed. "But she is most persuasive. She finally talked me into coming back and sitting in the courtroom. She agreed not to tell you I was here. Whether or not I would testify would be my own decision."

"And when his testimony was needed," Helen continued, "he told me he was ready."

Justice grinned. "Barrows thinks I arranged it that way. He practically assassinated me with his eyes."

"You've done a wonderful thing, Justice," Dr. Jamieson said. "Regardless of the judge's decision, you've given that boy new hope. And regardless of anything else, you've wrought a miracle for a certain doctor—you've restored his self-esteem."

There was a slight stir at the door. Sam Barrows strode down the aisle and took his place at the counsel

table. He put his elbows on the table, cradled his face in his hands and stared unhappily at the bench.

Justice was looking at his watch when Judge Winston came back into the courtroom. Barrows and Justice got to their feet, waited until the judge had taken his seat, then sat down again.

Judge Winston cleared his throat. "This is as shocking a situation as has ever been brought before this court," he said sternly. "James Murdock has gone for a ride on the merry-go-round of Illinois justice. There was no trial, but a sham, an act of false pretense and fraud. The illegal punishment of James Murdock is a clear demonstration of violence to the American concept of due process of law."

The judge paused, went on soberly: "It is a prosecuting attorney's duty to assist in giving a fair trial to a defendant. He must not only use the evidence against the accused, but he must not willingly ignore anything that is in his favor. It is manifest that the State's Attorney ignored the most vital evidence in this case—the testimony of Dr. Paul Jamieson. If this had been brought to the attention of the jury or the trial judge, it would have been impossible to convict James Murdock."

There was breathless quiet in the packed courtroom. The prisoner stared at the judge in almost open-mouthed disbelief. Then he turned toward Justice, and there was gratitude in his moist eyes. At that moment, Justice felt rewarded for his efforts.

Judge Winston continued delivering his opinion: "It is evident that the issue at the trial was not the guilt or innocence of the defendant. It was apparently an urgent desire to deprive Murdock of his freedom, probably to subjugate him because he possessed knowledge that would be dangerous to the State's Attorney or his friends."

The judge looked down at Barrows. There was contempt in his eyes. "James Murdock was the victim of vengeance on the part of corrupt officials. He was the victim of a gross miscarriage of justice. He was denied due process of law as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States."

Judge Winston paused again. "It is the decision of this court, therefore, that the conviction and sentence of James Murdock are null and void, that he has been illegally restrained and that he be discharged immediately."

The judge made no attempt to halt the tumultuous uproar that broke out among the spectators. He hesitated only long enough for another contemptuous glance at Barrows, then rose and strode into his chambers.

The next day Helen Ray walked rapidly into Justice's office and laid a copy of the *Daily News* on his desk. The headlines were big and black:

### THOMPSON QUILTS GOVERNOR RACE GIVES ILL HEALTH AS REASON; FLIES TO MEXICO FOR REST

Justice grinned. "That's that," he said. "What do you think now, Miss Ray?"

"I think, Mr. Justice," she retorted, "that you were very lucky. I also think it is high time you gave some attention to your corporate clients."

"Perhaps I shall," Justice agreed.

Monk opened the door. "Say, boss, there's a dame out here to see you. Says her old man—"

"—was unjustly imprisoned," Helen finished. "Peter, you're *not* going to do this all over again!"

"Not without a rest. At least twenty-four hours! Monk, tell the lady I'll see her next week."

"Right, boss. I'll make an appointment."

"And then you'll be off again." Helen sighed. "Before I can even get this case straight in my mind."

"What puzzles you?"

"I know why Joyce Adams posed as Jane Shaw and got you to working on the case. She obviously was working for the political party that wanted to discredit Thompson. But what I can't understand is why Thompson let you go through with it. He hired Nick Bonner. Why didn't the hoodlum kill you?"

"Because Thompson didn't want a murder just before election. He thought he could depend on the two principal witnesses, Cain Gilbert and Dr. Jamieson, to disappear. And he was right about them. Without them, Sam Barrows would have made me look foolish. The whole thing would have been put down to a political smear campaign. If Gilbert and Jamieson hadn't testified, the publicity would have reacted in Thompson's favor. Fortunately, Thompson didn't know about the hospital chart. That's what really sewed up the case."

MONK opened the door and James Murdock came in. He had on a new suit and most of the lines in his face had vanished, though there was still a trace of prison pallor. The bitterness was gone from his eyes.

"How's it going?" Justice asked.

"Wonderful, Mr. Justice, thanks to you! I start on my new job next week. And tonight I have a date with Joyce Adams."

"Swell, Jim!" Justice said. "Any other plans?"

"Yes." There was a misty expression in Murdock's eyes. "I'm going to try to catch up with freedom." •

# RELAX and ENJOY

## MOVIES ⇩



**Action War:** *Destination Gobi* (20th-Fox). An unusual yarn about a small Navy detachment sent during World War II to observe weather conditions in the Mongolian Desert, this film provides both a strong story and excellent Technicolor to create the appearance and feel of the vast sandland with its erratic temperatures and driving winds. Richard Widmark is the tough Navy petty officer forced to assume command of the predominantly scientific outfit when his officer is killed in an early Jap air attack; and thereafter it's his job to repel the enemy and keep peace with the Mongol natives.

**Science-Suspense:** *The Net* (GFD) is an excellent story on two levels. The scene is the barbed-wire enclosure of a top-secret air station, where researchers are preparing a hydroplane for experimental tests to prove it is three times as fast as any similar plane. On one hand, this is the absorbing study of well-contrasted characters wrapped up in their specialized jobs, living a hermit-like existence, oblivious to the world around them. On the other level, it is a good spy story, with a strong plot that keeps the tension mounting steadily to the finale.

**Documentary:** *The Sea Around Us* (RKO). Filmed in Technicolor, and based on Rachel Carson's best seller, this fascinating documentary is concerned primarily with the struggle for existence that goes on under water, from the smallest form of life to the most gigantic creature the world has ever seen—the blue whale, whose 170 feet makes it larger than even such prehistoric monsters as the dinosaur. The film was assembled from footage shot by scientific organizations, most of it never before shown to the public.

## RECORDS ⇩



**Classical:** For the past year the major record companies have concentrated on new recordings of old works. At last modern music is having its inning. Victor leads the way with a varied release highlighted by a Boston Pops concert of modern ballet music, *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*, which also includes "Sabre Dance" from Khachaturian's "Gayne," and six other selections to round out this extremely listenable album, making it one of the best record-buys to come along in months: . . . Stravinsky's *Piano Concerto (1923-'24)* is another outstanding Victor offering, with the composer himself conducting the RCA Victor Symphony.

NOTE: All records reviewed are available on all three speeds.

## BOOKS ⇩



**Historical Adventure:** *The Beckoning Waters* (Scribner's, \$3.95) by Robert Carse. This long novel has a fresh and unusual setting—the Great Lakes and its shipping industry during a period of sixty years. Against this background is told the story of Alan Kennard, the young Irish captain of a Great Lakes schooner who rose to become one of the industrial tycoons of the era. It is a turbulent story, covering the period from 1876 to 1932, full of the heartiness and heart-break of the days when the industrial frontiers of the Midwest were being thrust open by the Lakes shipping fleets and the blast furnaces of the Lakes cities.

**Self-Help:** *The Home You Want* (Crown, \$4.95) by George Daniels. If you want a home of your own—either to build it with your own hands, or to have it built for you—this is the book to show everything from the selection and purchase of land to the details of a \$700 cottage that can grow within a year to a seven-room home for as little as \$3,000 complete. The instructions are practical and money-wise, with every construction detail explained and illustrated in two colors. For those who plan to have their home built for them, there is an entire second volume edited by Julian Roth which is equally valuable in selecting an architect and builder, and in informing you how to get exactly what you want in a home.

## TELEVISION ⇩



**History:** *You Are There* is a televised history lesson that pays off in interest, entertainment, and information. Headline events of the past—the Boston Tea Party, for instance, or the Battle of Waterloo—are recreated for the camera as accurately as possible. Then the dramatized events are "covered" by teams of TV reporters just as they handle today's big news stories. The combination of history-come-alive and the exciting news techniques developed by television makes a fast-moving, fascinating show.

**Western:** The town of Huberle, Montana, is located on the outskirts of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This cartographer's nightmare was built by CBS-TV's stagehands and carpenters as a setting for *Action in the Afternoon*, a Western adventure series seen every weekday. It's a good show, equipped with all the standard features of frontier action-drama with the big plus of live TV's inherent on-the-spot excitement. The stories are well written, excellently acted, and the over-all production has the pace and scope necessary to pack real punch into each episode, making this excursion into "live" Western drama far better than the pretentious filmed cowboy adventures.

# Bluebook

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## LIFE IN TWELVE MINUTES

*The jury didn't even leave the box. He was guilty, they said, and the whole trial had taken exactly twelve minutes! Twelve minutes in which to send Murdock to jail for life, for a crime he never committed — a crime nobody committed.*

### ✓ THERE ARE SEA SERPENTS — Page 52

*Ocean monsters, which science tells us became extinct eons ago, have recently been sighted in the seas. Can they all be hoaxes?*

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### ✓ ALABAMA DIVORCE — Cafeteria Style — Page 43

*Least publicized of all divorce mills, Alabama grants an absolutely legal separation in two days — total elapsed time from your decision to the judge's — at a total of \$250.*

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