

ALL STORIES
COMPLETE



DEC.

15¢ DIME
DETECTIVE
MAGAZINE

COMBINED WITH FLYNN'S DETECTIVE FICTION

**MR. MADDOX'
PHONY-FINISH**
by T. T. FLYNN

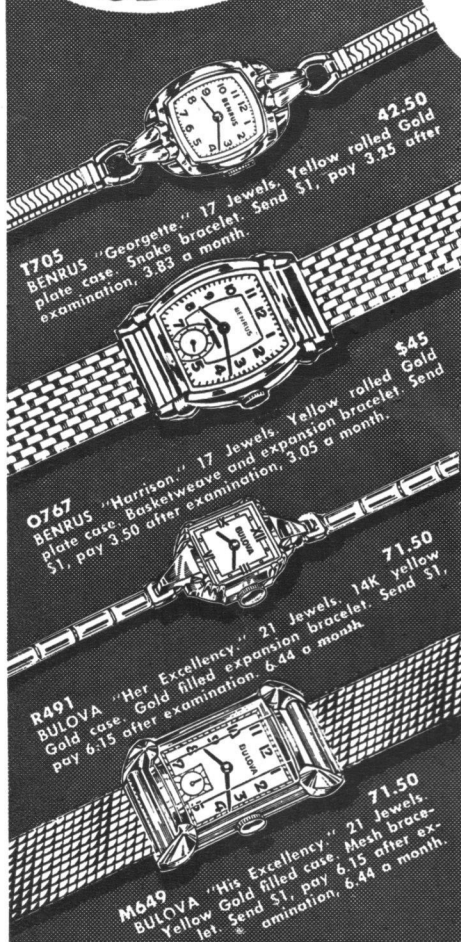
**NO GRAVE
HAS MY LOVE**
by JOHN D. MacDONALD



SEND ONLY

\$1

**WE WILL SEND ANY
ITEM YOU CHOOSE
FOR APPROVAL UN-
DER OUR MONEY
BACK GUARANTEE**



T705 "Georgette." 17 Jewels. Yellow rolled Gold plate case. Snake bracelet. Send \$1, pay 3.25 after examination, 3.83 a month. **42.50**

O767 "Harrison." 17 Jewels. Yellow rolled Gold plate case. Basketweave and expansion bracelet. Send \$1, pay 3.50 after examination, 3.05 a month. **\$45**

R491 "Her Excellency." 21 Jewels. 14K yellow Gold case. Gold filled expansion bracelet. Send \$1, pay 6.15 after examination, 6.44 a month. **71.50**

M649 "His Excellency." 21 Jewels. Yellow Gold filled case. Mesh bracelet. Send \$1, pay 6.15 after examination, 6.44 a month. **71.50**

Simply indicate your selection on the coupon below and forward it with \$1 and a brief note giving your age, occupation, and a few other facts about yourself. We will open an account for you and send your selection to you subject to your examination. If completely satisfied, pay the Expressman the required Down Payment and the balance in easy monthly payments. Otherwise, return your selection and your \$1 will be refunded.

SEND FOR FREE CATALOG



A201/C104 69.50
3 Diamond Engagement Ring, matching 5 Diamond Wedding Band. 14K yellow or white Gold. Send \$1, pay 5.95 after examination, 6.26 a month.



A407/C204 5100
5 Diamond Engagement Ring, matching 5 Diamond Wedding Band. 14K yellow or 18K white Gold. Send \$1, pay \$9 after examination, \$9 a month.



D418 \$75
Man's Ring, 2 Diamonds, center simulated Ruby. 14K yellow Gold. Send \$1, pay 4.50 after examination, 6.75 a month.



1 CARAT ZIRCON
2 Side Diamonds
F426 19.95
Genuine 1 Carat white Zircon, 2 side Diamonds. 14K yellow Gold. Send \$1, pay \$1 after examination, 1.80 a month.

Prices include Federal Tax

**SEND \$1 WITH COUPON — PAY BALANCE OF
DOWN PAYMENT AFTER EXAMINATION.**

L. W. Sweet, 25 West 14th St. (Dept. P16)
New York 11, N. Y.
Enclosed find \$1 deposit. Send me No. _____
Price \$ _____. After examination, I
agree to pay \$ _____ and required
balance monthly thereafter until full price is paid,
otherwise I'll return selection and you will refund
my dollar.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____

L. W. Sweet

MAIL ORDER DIVISION FINLAY STRAUS, INC.
25 W. 14th St., NEW YORK 11, N. Y. Dept. P16

DOUBLE VICTORY FOR DOUG...



SORRY, MISS, NO ADMITTANCE

BUT I MUST TELL HIM. IT MAY MEAN HIS LIFE!

LET HER IN, JOE

DOUG DANIELS, MIDGET RACE DRIVER, IS MAKING FINAL ADJUSTMENTS ON HIS LATEST MODEL WITH WHICH HE HOPES TO WIN TOMORROW'S \$5,000 HANDICAP WHEN...



AND THEN HE SAID THEY'D SAW PART WAY THROUGH YOUR TIE-ROD...

IF YOU HAVE IT STRAIGHT, MISS, THEY'LL TRY TONIGHT



BOY, HOW THEY FELL FOR THAT DUMMY!

REACH FOR THE ROOF!



Y-A-A-Y!

HE WON! HE WON!

WITH YOUR HELP, SIS

NEXT DAY



WHY YOU DIDN'T TELL ME YESTERDAY YOU WERE JIM RAND'S SISTER

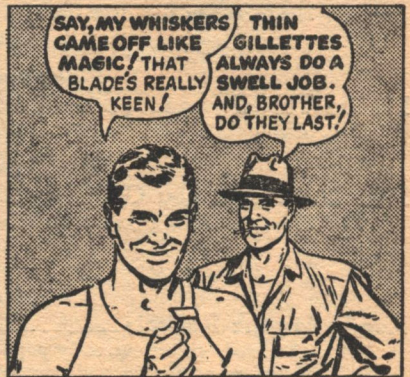
COME ON, SIS, WE'LL SEE YOU AT THE CLUB, DOUG

I WAS TOO EXCITED



I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO SHAVE IN TWO DAYS

USE MY RAZOR IF YOU WANT



SAY, MY WHISKERS CAME OFF LIKE MAGIC! THAT BLADES REALLY KEEN!

THIN GILLETTES ALWAYS DO A SWELL JOB. AND, BROTHER, DO THEY LAST!



SIS AND I ARE SAILING IN THE NEW YORK TO NASSAU RACE. HOW ABOUT COMING ALONG AS BALLAST?

BALLAST! YOU'RE TALKING TO AN EX-BOSUN!

H-M-M... GOOD-LOOKING

FOR SPEEDY, GOOD-LOOKING SHAVES AT A SAVING, TRY THIN GILLETTES. AMONG ALL LOW-PRICED BLADES, THEY'RE BY FAR THE KEENEST AND LONGEST-LASTING. ALSO, THIN GILLETTES FIT YOUR GILLETTE RAZOR EXACTLY... PROTECT YOUR FACE FROM NICKS AND IRRITATION. ASK FOR THIN GILLETTES IN THE CONVENIENT NEW TEN-BLADE PACKAGE

10-25¢
4-10¢

Thin Gillette Blades

New ten-blade package has compartment for used blades.

ALL STORIES COMPLETE 

15¢ DIME DETECTIVE MAGAZINE

COMBINED WITH FLYNN'S DETECTIVE FICTION
EVERY STORY NEW—NO REPRINTS

Vol. 58 CONTENTS FOR DECEMBER, 1948 No. 4

1—NOVEL OF THE HARDBOILED BOOKIE — 1
A corpse of another color ran first in —

Mr. Maddox' Phony-Finish-----**T. T. Flynn 14**
Mr. Maddox sided a movieland heel—when murder horsed around the bangtails.

3—SPINE-CHILLING DETECTIVE NOVELETTES — 3
The coffin's waiting, but —

No Grave Has My Love-----**John D. MacDonald 44**
Surgeon Spence was all cut up when his nurse resurrected the skeleton in his closet.

Every shot counts when you —

Meet Miss Murder-----**Philip Ketchum 60**
Chasing diamond smugglers for charity made Madeline a dead giveaway.

Drop everything for an order of —

Homicide in a Hurry-----**B. J. Benson 78**
The local Big Boy gave Shamus Dobson an invitation to sprout grass.

2—EXCITING CRIME-ADVENTURE STORIES — 2
With remains . . . to be seen —

I Take This Doom-----**Raymond Drennen, Jr. 35**
Glamorous Barbee wanted death the matrimonial way.

When you're chilled —

How Dead Can You Get?-----**Robert Turner 73**
She gave the big goon a tumble—but he wanted a graveful.

AND —

We want to know if you're


Ready for the Rackets-----**A Department 6**
The lowdown on currently popular swindle schemes. Here's a chance to test your ability as a reporter and win \$5.00 at the same time.

Countess of Hades-----**E. V. Stevens 12**
She was a strictly-from-sables babe—with a leaning to larceny.

The January Thrill Docket-----**59**
Preview of Peter Paige's thrilling novel, "The Corpse And I."

The January issue will be out December 3rd

Published monthly by Popular Publications, Inc., 2256 Grove Street, Chicago, 16, Illinois. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York, 17, N. Y. Henry Steeger, President and Secretary. Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice-President and Treasurer. Entered as second-class matter August 24, 1944, at the Post Office, at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1948, by Popular Publications, Inc. This issue is published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada. Copyright under International Copyright Convention and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction, in whole or in part, in any form. Title, Flynn's Detective Fiction, registered in U.S. Patent Office. Single copy, 15 cents. Annual subscription for U.S.A., its possessions and Canada, \$1.80; other countries 50 cents additional. Send subscription to 205 East 42nd Street, New York, 17, N. Y. For advertising rates, address Sam J. Perry, 205 East 42nd Street, New York, 17, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return, if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of unsolicited manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Any resemblance between any character, appearing in fictional matter, and any person, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and unintentional. Printed in the U.S.A.

7 out of  10 men wear Work Clothes and

Lee is the leader

If you wear work clothes—and 7 out of 10 men in the United States do—the chances are you already are familiar with Lee. Year after year men in all types of jobs have voted this famous Brand the Nation's Leader by a wide margin.

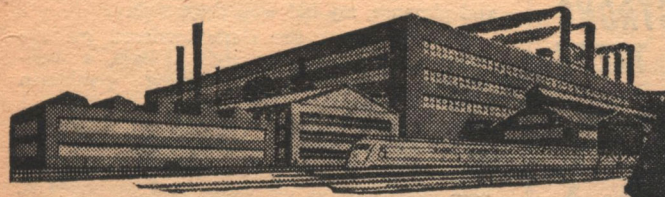
There are many reasons for Lee Leadership which can affect your pocketbook, your comfort and your appearance. Exclusive Lee fabrics wear longer and wash better . . . Lee "Tailored Sizes" give you a perfect fit regardless of your height or build. Scores of Lee features provide you with *extra* comfort and convenience.

And you take no chance when you buy Lee! If you don't agree that your Lee Work Clothes look better, fit better and wear longer than any you have ever worn, you can have a new garment free or your money back.

**Buy Lee Work Clothing
at Leading Stores Coast-to-Coast**

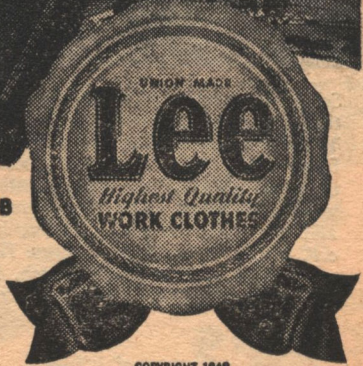
THE H. D. LEE COMPANY

Kansas City, Mo. • Minneapolis, Minn.
Trenton, N. J. • San Francisco, Calif.
South Bend, Ind. • Salina, Kansas



THERE'S A LEE FOR EVERY JOB

- Jett Denim Overalls
- Union-Alls :: Matched Shirts and Pants :: Dungarees
- Riders (Cowboy Pants)
- Overall Jackets.



COPYRIGHT 1948
THE H. D. LEE CO., INC.

WORLD'S LARGEST MANUFACTURER OF UNION-MADE WORK CLOTHES

STEMBITER

YELLO-BOLE

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

Honey-treated

NEW -

STEMBITER BIT a pipe for the man with **STRONG TEETH**

\$2.50

Some pipe-smokers often bite right through their pipe stems. Stembiter Yello-Bole is shaped so that it conforms to the shape of the teeth, and ends this trouble. The bowl, treated with bees' honey, makes smoke sweet and mild. Stembiter Yello-Bole at dealers', \$2.50. A variety of shapes. Kaufmann Bros. & Bondy, Inc., Estab. 1851. 630 Fifth Ave., New York 20, New York



This picture of Honey Girl is displayed wherever Yello-Boles are sold.



Identify Yello-Bole pipes by the honey-seal in the bowl. It keeps the honey fresh.

Ready for the Rackets

A Department

Racketeers and swindlers of all sorts are lying in wait for you, eager to rob or cheat you of your hard-earned cash. All you need to thwart them, guard against them, is a fore-knowledge of their schemes and methods of operation. Write in, telling us your own personal experiences with chisellers and con men of various sorts. It is our intention to publicize—withholding your name, if you wish—the information you have passed on, paying \$5.00 for every letter used. No letters will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope, nor can we enter into correspondence regarding same. Address all letters to The Rackets Editor—DIME DETECTIVE MAGAZINE, 205 E. 42nd St., N. Y. 17, N. Y.

Watch Out!

Dear Sir:

Confronted with a two hour delay before train departure time, I sought diversion. I sauntered casually along a main thoroughfare of the teeming, Minnesota metropolis for the purpose of window shopping and taking in the sights. I was just a small town boy, a hick from the sticks, and, in the course of my stroll, I saw much to engage and fascinate my interest and imagination.

A profuse display of large, billowing, multi-colored banners, a roaring loudspeaker and throngs of people, passing through its portals, all combined to lure me into a sizeable mercantile establishment. Arrived on the inside, I observed the proceedings of a jewelry auction in progress with keen interest and boyish curiosity.

The auctioneer displayed an apparently heavy gold, hunting case watch. "Twenty-one jewels," he announced, while reciting its multitude of virtues. I was tempted into "topping the field" with an eight dollar bid. To my great surprise and pleasure, my bid won the watch.

At the instant the clerk tendered me the watch in exchange for eight dollars, a well-dressed, dapper, smooth-talking gentleman stepped to my side and addressed me. "May I look at it? I have been a jeweler for twenty years and perhaps I can help you estimate its worth." Not troubling to await my consent, he took possession of the watch and examined it, carefully and thoroughly, in minute detail. At frequent intervals, during the course of this examination, he announced discovery of numerous faults and defects. As I was quite impressionable, he succeeded in fully convincing me of the utter worthlessness of the watch. His examination concluded, he extended the watch towards me, simultaneously assuring me, in no uncertain terms, that I had made a particularly poor bargain.

Giving the appearance of having resolved to assist me, he strode to the auctioneer, thrust the watch out at him and stated, in a firm voice, "This young gentleman doesn't care for this cheap, second-hand watch! He desires you to

(Please continue on page 8)



Nothing
ever held you
like
Alfred Hitchcock's

ROPE

IN COLOR BY **TECHNICOLOR** PRESENTED BY **WARNER BROS.**

STARRING
JAMES STEWART WITH **JOHN DALL FARLEY GRANGER** SIR CEDRIC HARDWICKE CONSTANCE COLLIER AND **JOAN CHANDLER**
Screen Play by Arthur Laurents - From the Play by Patrick Hamilton - Director of Photography, Joseph Valentine, A.S.C. **A TRANSATLANTIC PICTURES PRODUCTION**



TAKES GUESSWORK OUT OF PICTURE TAKING!

Get Perfect Pictures
Easily . . . Day or Night

Just aim, click! Anyone can get perfect pictures with the new Beacon II, pictures that expert photographers would be proud of. And foolproof, built-in flash synchronization gives you sharp, news-type pictures at night!

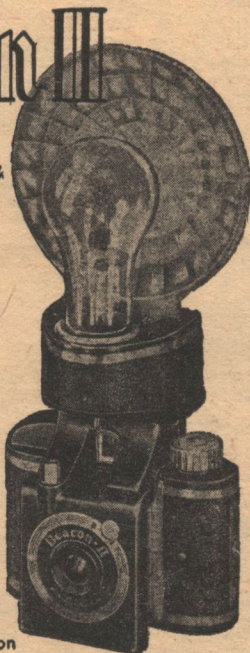
Beacon II

*Synchronized for
Flash Photography*

Takes color or black and white. So sharp you can make brilliant enlargements up to 8x10! Doublet lenses are coated on all four surfaces. Flash unit takes any size bulb. Has a built-in flash tester.

\$995
tax included!

Synchronized flash unit
only **\$495**
extra



Smart, weather-proof Beacon II Ever-Ready Carrying Case. Only \$2.50, tax included!

**ORDER NOW FOR
CHRISTMAS**

One Camera
That Clicks
With
Everyone!



USE THIS HANDY ORDER BLANK

CAMERA SALES, 50 West 24th Street, New York 10, N. Y.

Send _____ Beacon II Cameras complete with built-in synchronized flash unit at \$14.90 each, tax included.

Send _____ Beacon II Cameras without flash unit at \$9.95 each, tax included.

Send _____ Ever-Ready Cases at \$2.50 each, tax included.

Enclose check or money order and we'll ship postage pre-paid. Or send no money, and we'll ship C.O.D., plus few cents postal charges.

If not completely satisfied purchase may be returned for refund within 10 days.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

Ready for the Rackets

(Continued from page 6)

put a good watch up for auction. He will bid it in, and the eight dollars he paid for this watch will apply on the payment." The auctioneer silently accepted the extended watch.

In low tones, my newly acquired friend confided to me, "That is a watch! It has been advertised extensively in all the leading national magazines. It is, without a doubt, one of the world's finest watches." I entered bids up to a reasonable price and then desisted from further bidding. At this point, my friend took over and bid the watch in on my behalf—and at an exorbitant price!

Without my consent or approval, he disposed of my first purchase and contracted a second, all in my interests and on my behalf. The watch, it is superfluous to mention, was of obscure manufacture and of little value.

These irregular proceedings, however, aroused my latent, natural suspicions. The incident over, to gratify my curiosity, I walked boldly from the store, but unobtrusively re-entered and observed my recent helpmate from an obscure distance. My suspicions proved to have been well founded. There he was busily occupied with another sucker; following an almost identical routine! In subsequent years, I arrived at the realization that he was, very probably, a full-fledged member of a well-organized auctioneering racket gang.

Chuck Reed
Aurora, Colorado

No Change at All

Dear Sir:

Several years ago I was out of work. I put an advertisement in a Boston paper for a position as housekeeper. The next day a very refined gentleman came in answer to it, and offered me good pay and what seemed to be a very easy position.

I was to meet him at a Boston hotel that night with my suitcase, and he would take me to his home in a nearby city in his car, as he had driven it here to put over a big business deal. I met him and we went to the hotel. He seated me in the lobby while he went to make a telephone call to his home.

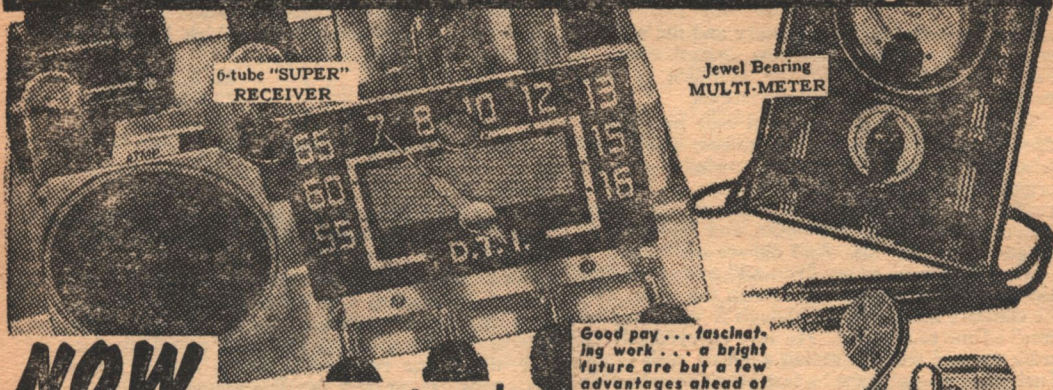
In a few minutes he came back and said he had been unable to do so as the clerk could not change a large bill for him, and he had no small ones. He asked me if I could lend it to him, and he would repay me as soon as he changed it. I gave him a dollar, and then waited for several hours, and he did not come back.

I made inquiries at the desk, and no one had seen him. I never heard from him again. No knowing how many other women he had duped the same night, probably many of them giving him a larger, or their last bill. I thought I was wise to big city tricks, but I must have been a regular country greenhorn.

Mrs. Hazel Heald
Malden, Massachusetts

(Please continue on page 10)

BIG NEWS from De Forest's Training, Inc.



6-tube "SUPER" RECEIVER

Jewel Bearing MULTI-METER

NOW you can get and **KEEP** all of this equipment to help you master . . . **RADIO — TELEVISION ELECTRONICS** at Home!

You **LEARN-BY-DOING** from building:

- (1) A modern 6-tube Superhet Receiver with **MAGIC TUNING EYE**, plus phono switch, tone control, and other features.
- (2) A high grade, commercial-type **MULTI-METER** with jewel bearing movements.
- (3) Over 200 instructive experiments from many shipments of Radio-Electronic parts, including tools.

You mount your parts on individual bases with spring clip terminals, enabling you to build new circuits and to experiment in a fraction of time normally required.

PLUS . . . the use of Learn-By-Seeing **MOVIES**. Only D.T.I. provides this remarkable training advantage in your own home to help you learn **FASTER . . . EASIER!**

PLUS . . . D.T.I.'s effective **EMPLOYMENT SERVICE** to aid you in getting started in Radio-Electronics-Television.

Mail the coupon today for **FREE FACTS** on how DeForest's Training, Inc., sends you everything you need to prepare and get started in America's great opportunity fields.

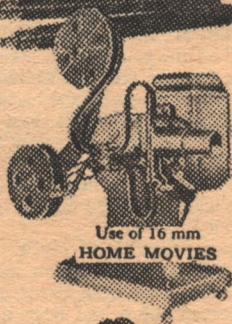
IF YOU PREFER, you can get your training in modern, well-equipped Chicago laboratories. Write for details.

DeFOREST'S TRAINING, INC.

Chicago, Illinois

Associated with the DeVry Corporation, Builders of Electronic and Movie Equipment

Good pay . . . fascinating work . . . a bright future are but a few advantages ahead of trained men in the opportunity fields of **RADIO-TELEVISION-ELECTRONICS**. Write for late facts about Television, F.M., Radio, Broadcasting, 2-Way Mobile Radio, Train Radio, and other fast-moving branches. See how D.T.I. helps you get started.



Use of 16 mm HOME MOVIES

ABOVE: In addition to the Radio-Electronic equipment you keep, you get the use of a 16 mm Motion Picture and many reels of movie film to speed your progress.



Many shipments of Radio-Electronic parts, permitting over **200** fascinating experiments

MAIL THIS OPPORTUNITY COUPON NOW!

DeForest's Training, Inc.
2533 N. Ashland Ave., Dept. PP-E12
Chicago 14, Illinois

Send me complete details showing how I may make my start in Radio-Electronics-Television. No obligation.

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

If under 16, check here for special information.

If a discharged veteran of World War II, check here.

*(Continued from page 8)***Swell Guy**

Dear Sir:

This happened to my secretary and me while I was employed by a veterans organization. I have since learned that the gimmick is used pretty freely with all organizations.

In this case, Sam (we will call him that), dropped in from Texas, a big, easy-going guy who had a broad general knowledge of our organizational setup. It didn't take us long to realize that Sam was a gold mine, on the whole, heart and soul with our outfit, and really ready to go to town for us. And did we need him!

He didn't have to say "you-all" more than five times before he had us sold down the river. No, he couldn't make lunch although it was "mighty fine" of me to ask him. He sure enjoyed talking with me and we'd be seeing a lot of each other. Incidentally—he flashed a last year's membership card in our outfit—his dues had lapsed. Would I ask my secretary to renew them before I left for lunch?

Would I? I called her in, introduced him, and practically ordered her to give him the keys to the city.

Sam renewed all right. In fact he went for the works, dues, button and all. My secretary was more excited about Sam than I was. I suspected there had been a vague mention of a telephone call as soon as Sam was settled in his new job.

It wasn't till his twenty-five dollar check on a Texas bank bounced that we even remotely suspected Sam's glitter wasn't pure gold. In fact my secretary insisted on writing a letter to the Houston bank calling their attention to the error.

So Sam now has a current membership card, button, knowledge of our San Francisco setup, plus nineteen bucks in cold cash with which to impress some other comrade as he travels from hither to yon.

That's right. In the infantry we always did it "The Hard Way."

Dick Goggin
San Francisco, California

Finders Keepers

Dear Sir:

This is an oldie that has been worked for years. Not much can be done to stop it, except to be on your guard.

A well-dressed, fast-talking gentleman enters your store and makes a purchase, usually from a new clerk although it often happens to others, and offers a ten dollar bill in payment for same which usually amounts to ten or twenty-five cents.

All the time he keeps talking about some subject of interest to almost everyone. Then when he has received his change of say \$9.90, he deposits this in his pocket and suddenly, without a chance for the victim to do much thinking about it, he will say: "Oh, I've got the exact change in my hand. Here it is. Give me the ten back and you won't have to change it."

This actually happened to my grocer who is

not a dummy by any means. But the fast talk and enthusiasm of the swindler is somewhat hypnotizing in effect.

When you wake up and realize what has happened, you have given \$19.90 and a ten cent purchase, all for ten dollars, which leaves you short ten on your check-up.

H. E. Bauer
Peoria, Illinois

Agent Behind Bars

Dear Sir:

Here is a vicious racket that I was an intended victim of, but I turned the tables on the racketeer himself.

My wife and I were apartment hunting and found a beautiful four-room apartment vacant, and the owner willing to rent it to us. After discussing the terms of the lease, rental amount, etc. the owner referred us to his renting agent in a small town near us. We phoned this agent and the owner told him to bring the lease for us to sign.

The next day this agent came to the rooming house where we were living, ostensibly to have us sign the lease. After going over the terms of the lease again he told us that there was a minor item the owner had neglected to mention, a "Finders Fee" of three hundred dollars. When I asked what this fee was for, I was told it was for finding the apartment.

I refused to pay it and I then consulted the district attorney of my county who told me that this agent's demand was a violation of the state law and to have the agent arrested. This I did and the agent, after a fair trial, was convicted and given a sixty day term in the county jail, which the judge suspended, due to the man's previous clean record.

W. D. Anderson
Mount Kisco, New York

Cash-Registered Complaint

Dear Sir:

Last December, our store, which is one of the largest department stores in this town, took on several temporary employees to help during the Christmas rush.

During this time, there was one cash register that would check up ten or twenty dollars short every day. There were seven people using this cash register and even the store detective could not spot who was taking the money.

Finally, after the losses had been going on for almost two weeks, the store detective discovered how it was done.

One of the new salesgirls was working with a man partner. The man would come into the store and make some small purchase for which he would give the girl a dollar bill. The salesgirl would put the dollar bill in the register and give the man change for a twenty dollar bill. This gave the pair a profit of about nineteen dollars, and it was a system that was almost impossible to detect.

R. C. Parker
San Francisco, California

(Please continue on page 97)

DRAW ME!

TRY FOR A

Free Art Course



Copy this girl and send us your drawing—perhaps you'll win a **COMPLETE ART COURSE FREE.**

FIVE PRIZES—five complete art Home Study courses **FREE** including Drawing Outfits (Value of each course, \$240.00).

FREE! Each contestant submitting a drawing of sufficient merit will get a grading and our opinion as to whether his or her talent is worth developing.

Vocational Training for talented artistic persons is of tremendous importance. Almost everything must be designed before it can be manufactured.

Only talented persons can be trained as designers and illustrators. Splendid opportunities are available for trained Advertising Artists, Illustrators and Cartoonists. Many of our former students are earning excellent incomes. Here's an opportunity for you to learn more about this interesting profession.

RULES

Contestants must be amateurs. Our students not eligible. 1. Make copy of girl 5 inches high, on paper 7 inches high. Draw only the girl, not the lettering. 2. Use only pencil or pen. 3. No drawings will be returned. 4. Print your name, address (town, county, state), age, phone number and present occupation on back of drawing. If you live in an apartment give apartment number. 5. All drawings must be received by November 30, 1948. Prize winning drawings will be selected by our faculty.

◀ **ART INSTRUCTION** ▶ **INC** ▶

ESTABLISHED 1914

Dept. 11938, 500 So. 4th Street, Minneapolis 15, Minn.

COUNTESS OF HADES

THE girl couldn't have been more than nineteen. She had a pert face and blonde tresses. She was poised and regal as she approached the desk of Baltimore's most fashionable hotel and announced:

"I am Countess Lansfeld, Baroness Rosenthal, of Bavaria. I would like a suite. Also, I must insist on complete privacy. I do not wish any publicity."

Thus Kentucky-bred Editha Salomen, daughter of a carnival faker known as "Professor" Salomen, began her career of fakery, swindling and duplicity that kept America and England agog for 30 years—and netted her an estimated \$3,000,000.

Editha played her part like a veteran. To the young bloods she was the most vivacious thing that had happened to them in many a year. She had charm, coquetry—and a title. Her escorts were only the wealthiest. Having trouble choosing the right one, she became engaged to five at the one time—secretly of course.

She stalled off her impatient suitors with a long, sad story about the terrible tangle her affairs were in in Europe. She had a great fortune coming to her, and she was being forced to pay heavy legal fees out of her most meager allowance. Her suitors gallantly offered their aid, in sums up to \$25,000.

Her continued stalling made one suitor suspicious. When he compared notes with another of Editha's fiancés. Editha was put under arrest. Feigning insanity, she was taken to a mental hospital.

She wasn't in the hospital long. H.L. Messant, a physician of unimpeachable reputation, secured her release as cured. Editha gratefully married the elderly physician. Within a year he died and left Editha with a small inheritance.

New York beckoned the girl from Kentucky now. Through her late husband's connections, she was welcomed by the most fashionable people in the city. It became quite the fad to have your character "read" by Mrs. Messant.

But her travels in high society had only one goal—a rich husband. She finally

settled on a retired British general, General Diss Debar. In a great church wedding, Editha became Ann O'Delia Diss Debar, the name she later made notorious as "The Countess of Hades."

Disillusionment was not far behind the wedding, however. It seems the general also had been seeking a wealthy mate. There was nothing for Ann O'Delia to do but go back to her readings.

Among those who came to her was a retired corporation lawyer, Luther R. Marsh. He had been a lonely widower for ten years, and he was deeply grateful to Ann for giving him a message from his long-dead spouse.

Ann told the old lawyer. "I am in spiritual communication with the dead painter, Raphael. As a reward for your faithfulness to the world of the spirits, Raphael has offered to paint some pictures for you. And you will be able to sell them for thousands."

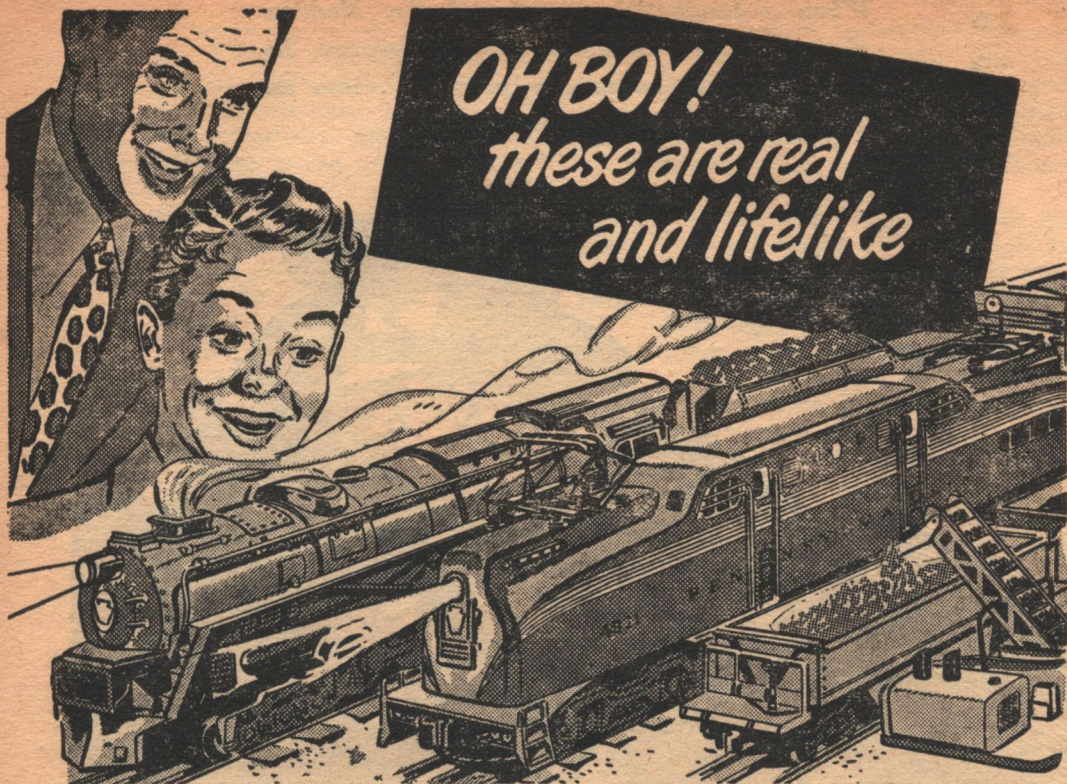
Anna had varying fees for getting in touch with artists clear back to the Pleistocene Age. The better the painter—the bigger the fee. The artist who perpetrated this fraud was never apprehended.

It was the old lawyer Marsh, or rather his relatives in New York, that was the undoing of the fabulous swindler. When she tried to get Marsh to turn over property he owned worth more than \$200,000, relatives stepped in and had Ann arrested. Her trial made the headlines for weeks, particularly when her tricks were exposed. She received six months.

When she got out of jail, Diss Debar was dead, and Ann married Kenneth Jackson, a vaudeville man with a trained seal act. He gave up his seals and the pair went to London. There they launched a pseudo-religion called "Theocratic Unity." Ann was Swami, and her husband Theo.

The big money once more began to roll in for Ann—until the law caught up with her again. Ann was convicted in Old Bailey at the age of 51 and sentenced to seven years. "Theo," her third husband, got 10 years.

—E. V. STEVENS



OH BOY!
*these are real
 and lifelike*

LIONEL TRAINS

Father and Son together—the great model railroading team! There's no fun in the world like the thrill of operating the new LIONEL TRAINS, built just like the kind used on America's crack roads. Send for the Special 25¢ Offer now. The beautiful full color Cata-

log describes the Locomotives that puff Smoke and Whistle. It tells all about the new Diesels, the streamlined Cars, Electronic Control trains, LIONEL Construction Kits and many other features.

Details of 25¢ Offer below.

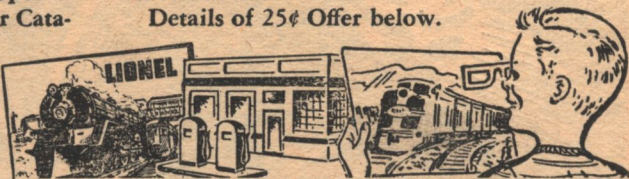
Special 25¢ Offer

- 1 This is what we'll send you: Beautiful 36-page LIONEL TRAIN Catalog in full color
- 2 Set of 3-dimensional views of LIONEL TRAINS IN ACTION.
- 3 Pair of Stereopticon Eyeglasses for viewing scenes.
- 4 Special Kit of 6 colorful cut-out buildings to create realism for your train layout.

Ask your local LIONEL dealer to show you the 1948 line!

Train sets as low as \$15.95!

SEND FOR IT AT ONCE!



LIONEL TRAINS, P. O. Box 351
 Madison Square Station, New York 10, N. Y.

I enclose 25¢. Please send me Special Offer of 36-page full color Catalog, Stereopticon views of LIONEL TRAINS, Stereopticon Eyeglasses, and Kit of 6 building cut-outs.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZONE _____ STATE _____

◆
◆
◆
*When a fascinatin' filly tipped Mr. Maddox
about a Hollywood-heel fix—he proved he
could run as fast as any plug . . . into an
obit column.* ◆
◆
◆

**By T. T.
FLYNN**



**Exciting Mystery Novel
of the Fabulous Bookie**

MR. MADDOX' PHONY-FINISH



Morton hooked a left to the man's middle.

CHAPTER ONE

Well-Heeled Heel

ARLINGTON track, Chicago, was a long way from Hollywood this rosy June dawn when Mr. Maddox stood big and bland and amiable before the empty grandstand among sharp-eyed clockers and railbirds.

Out beyond the glassy infield lakes and lush green grass, far out on the backstretch, a black ghost of a horse had started a fast workout run. Pete Cheney, one of the top riders, was breezing Hot-



shot, owned by Mike Morton, glamour star of hardboiled films.

This morning Mike Morton himself was a railbird, along with studio personnel, newspaper people, friends and fans. The press-agent odor about this dawn clambake was rank. Cassidy, the big, stocky, Masterton Agency detective, put it into punchy words at Mr. Maddox' elbow. "Pure cheeseburger," Cassidy snorted. "If Morton wins that seventy-five thousand dollar stake-race tomorrow, he draws a million smackeroos in publicity for free. All that for a phony acting like a phony!"

Sharp-eyed clockers waited with tense thumbs on fine stop watches as Pete Cheney brought the black horse through the stretch and Mike Morton posed in a cleared spot at the track fence. He stood chest out, black hair carelessly ruffled, while three cameramen sighted on him. The newspapers had been full of it. Mike Morton, hardboiled star of hard-punching screen successes, had arrived in Chicago with half a trainload of Hollywood notables to open the glamorous world *première* of Morton's latest technicolor epic: *The Hotshot*.

Last year Mike Morton had purchased a black horse named Hotshot. The film hero owned a racing stable and a film horse also named Hotshot. Moreover, Mike Morton's real horse Hotshot did have a chance to take the Lakeview Stakes, seventy-five thousand added.

The *première* of the film was scheduled for tomorrow, the day of the race. It had more angles than a producer's contract. This dawn visit of Mike Morton to the track was part of the build-up.

Pete Cheney brought Hotshot to the wire with a drumming rush. The cameras got their shots. Mike Morton pivoted slowly at the fence, binoculars still at his eyes, while Pete Cheney, standing in the irons, brought the horse cantering back from the clubhouse turn.

Cassidy said, "Where you going?"

Mr. Maddox said, "Making hay while the sun shines, chum." He strolled big and amiable toward Mike Morton's lone figure at the fence.

Cameramen were hurriedly inserting fresh bulbs. The nearest man gestured impatiently at Mr. Maddox.

"Keep back! We gotta get him reaching across the fence to his horse!"

"I'll buy you a better shot, boys," promised Mr. Maddox genially. "Don't miss it—Mike-the-Chiseler with his pinkie in his pocket paying off. Might not happen again."

Mike Morton licked his lips and let out an explosive, "What the hell!" He caught the genial voice now and turned fast, jerking the glasses from his eyes.

"Surprise," said Mr. Maddox.

Mike Morton licked his lips and let out an explosive, "What the hell!" He swiveled a look toward the spectators.

Mr. Maddox chuckled. "You don't need help, Mike. Not here in front of your public."

MIKE MORTON'S flat-waisted, padded-shoulder fitness was dominated by the famous close-shaved strong jaw whose sinister purpose could sprinkle goose pimples through any screen audience. Mike Morton's ash-gray eyes could narrow in bitter threat. He could speak in a low-clipped crackle positively venomous.

He did all that now as he cased the binoculars with an angry shove. "Beat it, Maddox."

Two men joined them with a kind of silent sinister interest. They sided Mr. Maddox, right and left, and looked inquiringly at Mike Morton.

Mr. Maddox ignored them. "No goons, Mike. Or will you try a chowder party with newspaper shots and captions?"

Mike Morton eyed cameramen on both sides of the woven-wire fence. "Keep those damn cameras out of this," he ordered nervously.

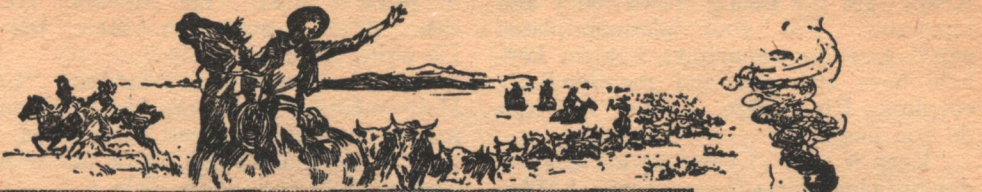
A small nervous man with hollow cheeks and milk-white teeth in a blue-lipped mouth broke out of the background crowd. "What gives?" he demanded angrily. "Maddox, you aren't making trouble, are you?"

He was Kenny Parker, Mike Morton's director. Mr. Maddox grinned broadly.

"Stick around and see, Kenny. Did I tell you on the Coast or didn't I?"

Kenny Parker looked like he wanted to wring carefully manicured hands. "Not here, Joe. Not now."

A THOUSAND MILES THAT WILL LIVE FOR A THOUSAND YEARS!...



Blazing in its action —
Thundering in its drama —
stirring in the sweep of its magnificent production
YES—IN 25 YEARS ONLY THREE EPIC WESTERNS...

"COVERED WAGON" • "CIMARRON"
and now...

HOWARD HAWKS' GREAT PRODUCTION

RED RIVER



THE FEUD!
Vengeance...exploding
in the fury of a
desperate fight
to the finish!

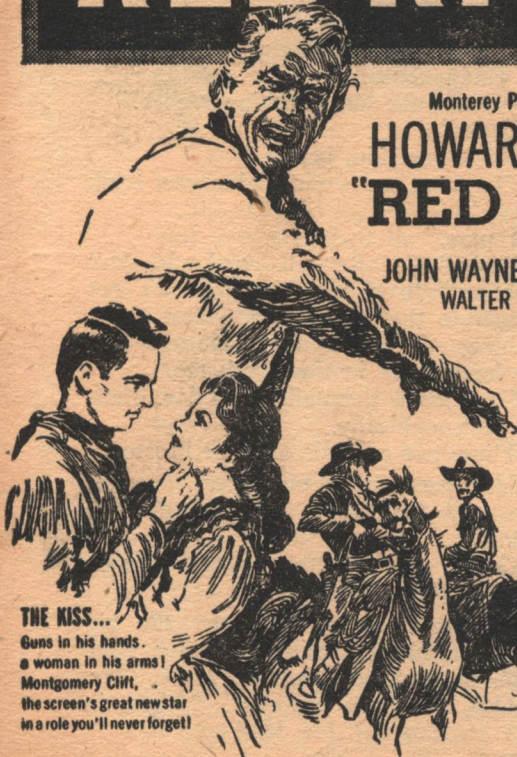
Monterey Productions presents

HOWARD HAWKS' "RED RIVER"

starring

**JOHN WAYNE • MONTGOMERY CLIFT •
WALTER BRENNAN • JOANNE DRU**

with **HARRY CAREY, Sr.** • **COLEEN GRAY** • **JOHN IRELAND** • **NOAH BEERY, Jr.**
HARRY CAREY, Jr. • **PAUL FIX** • From the Saturday Evening Post story,
"The Chisholm Trail", by Borden Chase
Screenplay by Borden Chase and Charles Schnee
Executive Producer, Charles K. Feldman
Directed and Produced by **HOWARD HAWKS** • Released thru **UNITED ARTISTS**



THE KISS...

Guns in his hands.
a woman in his arms!
Montgomery Clift,
the screen's great new star
in a role you'll never forget!



COMING TO YOUR FAVORITE THEATRE!

Mr. Maddox said, "Here! Right here, Kenny—for the racing crowd today and tomorrow. For your platinum-plated world *première* tomorrow. For the key-hole boys and gals and the syndicate columns. Right here, Kenny, and how do you like it?"

"Keep it soft," Kenny Parker begged, down-slicing palms for emphasis. "Mike, what about it?"

"The hell with him!"

Kenny Parker grimaced warning. "Keep your temper, Mike. Hold back."

Mr. Maddox snapped, "Boo!"

Mike Morton flinched.

Mr. Maddox loomed there among them, huge and amused. "Stop believing your tough publicity, Mike. And if these goons grab my arms while you take a punch at me, I'll knock all your heads together. Dig, chiseler."

A ponderous shoulder came against Mr. Maddox' right shoulder. It was Cassidy shunting the dapper stranger on that side out of the way. Cassidy said bruskiy, "I'm Masterton Agency. We won't have rough stuff around the track this morning."

"Now comes cops," Kenny Parker all but wailed under his breath.

Cassidy slid a question from the corner of his mouth. "Joe, what's up?"

"Hotshot there welshed on a horse bet last winter. Pushed my man Oscar in the face when Oscar went around to see him about it. Told me over the telephone his bodyguards would work me over if I bothered him. Then he stayed behind his screen of stooges and secretaries and laughed it off. Now comes pay-day morning."

Cassidy's manner switched to suspicious challenge. "You laid against his horse bet at Santa Anita?"

"Not at the track; got witnesses," said Mr. Maddox cheerfully.

Cassidy, one of the crack Masterton men detailed to halt bookmaking at the big tracks, took it with a defeated shrug and ran a bleak eye over the star and director.

"So long as it don't get rough at the track, welshed on bets ain't my business," said Cassidy. His cold look speared Mike Morton. "Welshed a bet, did you?"

Kenny Parker down-palmed again in

anguish. "There ain't a straighter guy in pictures than Mike Morton. He's clean. He's a sportsman. Here, Joe—I'll write you a check."

"Nix," refused Mr. Maddox. "Let Hair-on-his-Chest scratch his own bank paper. And if he gives rubber and it bounces, he'll be a soft mark for smart lawyers."

"Mike, don't be stubborn," Kenny Parker urged, keeping his voice down. "You can't hit the headlines as a bad loser. Not with the picture *première-ing*!"

Mike Morton breathed an explosive oath. He yanked a checkbook and pen, scrawled fast, ripped the check out and thrust it at his director.

"Give it to fatso before I bust loose and paste him."

Kenny Parker relayed the check to Mr. Maddox. "Okay, Joe? How about shaking hands all around?"

Mr. Maddox put the check in a thick pigskin billfold, and the billfold back in his pocket. "For my money he's still a chiseler, Kenny."

Cassidy walked away with Mr. Maddox. The big Masterton detective was thoughtful. "Joe, the guy on your left was Eddy Ganzel."

"Ganzel—the slot machine racket?"

"Yeah."

"Never met him before."

"The mug on your right was Dink Sutton."

"I pass."

"Basketball, football and baseball gambling," listed Cassidy. "Dink's got a finger in the Nevada and West Coast gambling. Works out of Chicago and may have a cut in the Syndicate."

"Can't know them all," said Mr. Maddox philosophically.

"Those two are pals of Mike Morton."

"He likes sharp characters around. Goes with his tough publicity. He's a punk."

"Ganzel and Sutton aren't. That's why I pushed in, Joe."

They were out from under the big empty grandstand, pausing at the edge of the sun-washed parking space. Mr. Maddox lifted an eyebrow. "Right in there pitching for Joe Maddox?"

"What else, pal?"

They eyed each other. Then Mr. Mad-

dox, chuckling, headed away from Cassidy. Mr. Maddox stopped beside the blue convertible, pulled the eight thousand dollar check from his thick bill-fold and studied it again. Mike Morton had been rawhided in public. Ten against three he'd try anything against Joe Maddox he thought would stick.

A girl's voice broke the quiet. She had been sitting far down in the front seat of the convertible and she sounded strained, hurried.

"Count it somewhere else. Mike and his friends might get ideas if they see me in your car!"

CHAPTER TWO

Chiseler's Fix

ONLY her face showed above the door, her mouth a line of determined scarlet, jet-black hair cut short, waved and combed back, framing a thin intelligent face with high cheekbones.

Her nervousness seemed genuine as Mr. Maddox walked around the front bumper and slid in beside her without comment. He punched the starter button, backed, turned, sent the long blue convertible in a smooth rush across the broad parking space.

"This what you want?" he asked briefly.

She said, "Yes," and sat higher in the seat and smoothed the rough-spun linen skirt across her knees. Her hat was on her lap, white with a rolled yellow silk band. She had slim legs, slim ankles. She was past the middle-twenties, and sun-colored competent hands were bending the white felt hat brim with nervous tension.

"So what?" Mr. Maddox prodded.

She moistened the scarlet lips. Smoky eyes swung and studied his broad bland face. "I saw you take Mike down to size."

Mr. Maddox drove silently, not helping her.

She said, "He needed it."

Mr. Maddox swung the convertible toward Chicago without comment.

She looked ahead through the windshield and moistened lips again. She spoke with the faintest strain husking in

a low voice. She never looked at him. "He was a good guy once. Would you believe it?"

Mr. Maddox looked at her quizzically. "Should I believe it?"

Color came under her makeup. "Mike was swell when he had to rub pennies in his pocket and worry about the shine on his last good suit. Honestly."

She held the rolled hat brim tightly, teeth down hard on her bright lower lip. Mr. Maddox guessed her glance missed the windshield and highway. She was looking back, far back through a corridor of years.

"So Mike Morton didn't marry you?" he said suddenly.

It hurt her. He meant to hurt a little, so she'd start talking. He saw the color go from under her makeup fast. Saw her swallow hard.

"When Mike went to the Coast on his first contract, he got me a job at the same studio."

"Big-hearted, wasn't he? What kind of a job?"

"Typist. It kept us near each other."

"A heart like a barrel of tripe," Mr. Maddox said kindly.

She said, still looking ahead, "Mike's future was too uncertain to risk marrying."

"He hates a risk, doesn't he?"

She was not on the defensive. She seemed to be presenting facts in a thoughtful way. "I always thought Mike would click in pictures. My boss in wholesale furs here in Chicago had a cousin who was a talent scout. I needed the contact until the cousin caught Mike's act one night and Mike got his chance."

"Every skunk deserves one chance. How did he ditch you, sister? Rough or easy?"

Her slow smile was hardly what Mr. Maddox expected. It was a reflective, twisted little smile which found humor of a sort in what had happened.

"Mike was busy. He was on loan to other studios. On location. Personal appearances. Publicity ordered him to be seen in the right spots with the right girls. Which didn't mean studio typists. Mike didn't ditch me. He faded away. One day he wasn't there."

"Kidding yourself?"

"Thank heaven, no." She seemed to mean it. "Mike was a front-office pet by then, getting A scripts with fat budgets. Hardboiled on the screen and off. A stranger to me. I couldn't use that Mike Morton."

"Did you have the chance?"

"Why ask? But I wouldn't have had any of him. That Mike Morton wasn't what I wanted."

"What do you want now, sister?"

Mr. Maddox watched her smooth the felt hat brim carefully. Watched her shape the crown with absent little pats.

"Mike was a good guy once. . . . Let's give him a break."

"Why?"

Her smile at the hat was a little crooked, without illusions. "Mike's on top now and alone, although he doesn't realize it. He could fall fast. Hard."

"Here's hoping," said Mr. Maddox cheerfully.

She looked at him then, smoky eyes dark, earnest behind the wry smile. "You're a bad liar, Joe Maddox. I'm Sheila Young."

"Should I be glad to know you, Sheila? Or am I supposed to?"

"I'M ASSISTANT to Pete Morse, who's handling exploitation of *The Hotshot*. I get the dirt, including some that doesn't reach Pete Morse."

"What hasn't reached Pete Morse?"

"There was too much drinking on the train coming here. Mike's stateroom door was left open at the wrong moment. A fix is being built around Mike's horse in the race tomorrow."

Mr. Maddox was startled out of his bland indifference. "Not that race—not with Morton's horse tied in with a couple million dollars worth of film. They wouldn't dare."

"Who wouldn't?" Sheila Young asked coolly. She sat full upright, turning a little to him and drove her points man-like. "Skip Mike's future. Forget the picture. The talk was in Mike's stateroom. Sutton and Ganzel and Patsy Radigan, Mike's bodyguard, were playing poker. It was Sutton, evidently, who said, 'Mike, if we could be sure your horse wouldn't take that race, we could lift half a million out of it. No risk, no

taxes. Your cut—' Then someone noticed the door ajar and slammed it."

"That kind of talk floats around any beer joint," said Mr. Maddox skeptically.

"Patsy Radigan came out in the aisle a moment later to see who had passed the door."

"Could happen after windy talk like that floating through the open door."

"The party who overheard the talk got a big play from Eddy Ganzel the rest of the trip."

"Who overheard? A woman?"

"It doesn't matter. Sutton and Ganzel sent telegrams and made long-distance calls at Albuquerque, La Junta and Kansas City. When I heard what had been said, I dropped a hint to Mike. He tried to find out where I'd gotten the idea. Mike swore every horse he'd ever entered in a race had been run on the level and always would."

Some thought hardened Mr. Maddox' broad face momentarily. "Why tell me all this?"

She punched the hat crown with a glossy red nail tip. "I hinted to Pete Morse. He said he didn't blame me for hating Mike's guts, but to keep it out of my job on Mike's pictures."

"They know you were Morton's girl once?"

Her twisted smile was backed with a shrug. "I'm listed as Mike's first brush-off. Not that anyone cares. But my motives are suspect."

"Go to the Masterton Agency or the track stewards. You'll get action."

"And a mess of screaming publicity," she said with husky vehemence. "We're talking about Mike Morton, with a colossal build-up around the race and his picture tomorrow. I know I'm right—but Mike wouldn't admit his shady pals would take a chance on wrecking him."

"He brushed you off; he tried to crook me. Now it's you who wants me to help him." Mr. Maddox shook his head. "Now I've seen everything."

"Will you help?"

Mr. Maddox said, "No," with flat finality. He watched a pinched look come white at her mouth corners and added a reason that made sense to a racetrack man.

"Why should smart characters tamper

with a race like the Lakeview tomorrow? The condition books are loaded with cheap races and cheap platers which can be knocked off form with an extra hard workout and no one the wiser? Want my advice?"

She said, "No. But I asked for it, didn't I?"

"Get Mike Morton out of your mind."

She said tightly, "Thanks. Drop me at the Stevens."

Morning traffic raced north and south on broad Michigan Avenue. When the convertible swung to the curb at the avenue entrance of the Stevens, Sheila slipped out and spoke through the open window. "Changed your mind?"

Mr. Maddox shook his head, smiling.

"You won't let this get out?"

"I'll have it in every newspaper."

She smiled faintly. Her look went up and down the avenue.

"It was a good town once, Joe Maddox," she said with soft intensity. "It was hard work and no money. But it had nice dreams. They sailed in off the lake like those white clouds."

She turned abruptly and crossed the wide sidewalk, a slim hurrying figure which vanished into the Stevens without looking back.

Mr. Maddox said softly, "Hollywood!" and swung right around the block and north to his own hotel.

OSCAR was waiting in the suite with visitors. Mr. Maddox was inside, the door closed behind him, before he saw the two strangers who flanked Oscar in chairs near the windows.

The man on the right had a beak of a nose, heavy loose lips, a muddy stare under the down-pulled brim of a yellow-tinted Panama.

The other second stranger sat forward, elbows firm on the chair arms and highly-polished English brogues flat on the floor. He stared with morose swarthy intentness, mouth tight under a pencil line of dark mustache.

Oscar was a small wizened man who had come through life the hard way and showed it on his cynical face. Oscar made a resigned gesture and said, "Like a



Country Doctor

*The Pipe Mixture
with the KINDLY disposition*

Gentle... mild-mannered... always reliable... just like the good old country doctor after whom it is named. Has the makings of life-long pipe friendship. A hospitable blend of the world's finest, rarest tobaccos. Cool, satisfying, slow-burning, and such grand flavor.

TRY IT TODAY...



The Pipe
Smoker's
ECONOMY
LUXURY

25
Pleasureful
Pipefuls for
25¢

If your dealer does not have it — write Philip Morris & Co., Ltd., Inc., Dept. M24, 119 Fifth Avenue, New York 3, N. Y.

Enclosing 25¢ for full size package

dope I opened the door. In they came to wait for you, Joe. That's all I get out of them. Very cagey gorillas."

The younger man stood with animal-like grace and wheeled to Oscar's chair. His negligent palm caught Oscar full face with a sharp crack. Oscar's head bounced against the upholstered chair back.

"Wise guy," the young man's dull murmur remarked. He brought the swarthy intent look back to Mr. Maddox.

The other man's muddy stare ignored Oscar. Leaning back lazily, right hand inside his coat, he pushed the heavy lower lip into a thoughtful pout. His remark had a creamy mildness.

"No need to get nervous, Maddox." The beak of a nose twitched. "This is a friendly call. Heard you were leaving town."

Oscar sucked a dismal breath. "Friendly," said Oscar wanly. His eyes were shoe-button bright as they watched Mr. Maddox.

Oscar was a timid little man. Also a very dangerous little man when cornered. In a hard lifetime Oscar had picked up every trick of foul fighting. He sat quietly now, watching a slow broad smile break across Mr. Maddox' moon-like face as Mr. Maddox lumbered toward them, big and ungainly.

"Let's call room service for breakfast," suggested Mr. Maddox blandly. "Mike Morton, Eddy Ganzel or Dink Sutton might drop in too. We'll have five gorillas to feed then instead of two."

A blank silence held while Mr. Maddox advanced, still smiling. Then the young man's punishing palm flashed a vicious up-sweep.

The sharp crack was its contact with Mr. Maddox' large right palm, up astonishingly fast for such a clumsy smiling man. Mr. Maddox' big hand clamped hard, twisted violently. Pain hissed from the swarthy face. Its owner bobbed over like a well-oiled jack-in-the-box, levered by his twisted arm.

Oscar's low dive hit the young man from behind, just above the ankles. Mr. Maddox' twisting shove drove the visitor back. Legs flipped forward. The twisting body shot back helplessly against the up-leap of the beak-nosed man.

They crashed back in the chair, tangled, swearing. Mr. Maddox' big palm smashed down on the swarthy face as it jack-knifed up.

Oscar had eeled around to the chair like a wizened bitter shadow. The heel of Oscar's palm wiped fast and hard over the older man's nose. It drove out a strangled yelp of pain. Oscar grabbed a short-barreled, nickel-plated revolver from the man's groping hand and jumped back.

Mr. Maddox slapped the swarthy face down again. His ham-like palm had fast-numbing force. He said, "I'll take the gun, Oscar. Frisk the top one before he gets up."

Oscar frisked swiftly, silently, thoroughly, and stepped away, button-bright eyes watchful. "He's clean, Joe."

Mr. Maddox moved to the telephone and asked for room service. He was breathing hard. The smile came back on his broad face as he hefted the gun and watched the two disheveled men lurch unsteadily out of the chair. Blood dripped slowly from the beak-like nose Oscar had roughed.

"What for breakfast, friends?" Mr. Maddox inquired genially.

The older man pressed a handkerchief hard against his bleeding nose and caught the golden Panama off the floor. His creamy voice was curdled, muffled under the red-spotted linen.

"Get out, Jack."

Oscar rubbed his slap-reddened cheek as the door slammed behind the two. Mr. Maddox ordered four eggs, triple rasher of bacon, a quart of orange juice, five slices of toast, half a melon and a pot of coffee. He cradled the phone down, tossed the shiny revolver beside it and walked to the sun-flooded windows.

Mr. Maddox was watching the clouds pensively when Oscar's accusing blurt broke the false peace. "Did I hear Mike Morton's name?"

Mr. Maddox replied without turning. "Morton was at the workouts this morning. I collected the eight grand."

"You mentioned Dink Sutton."

"Know him?"

"He's a high-roller and a fixer."

"He was at the track with Mike Morton. Also a big key in the slot-machine racket named Eddy Ganzel was there."

Mr. Maddox rubbed his chin, still watching the white clouds. "Eddy Ganzel or Dink Sutton must have telephoned from somewhere near the track for those two hoodlums to run us out of town."

"IT WAS a nice morning," said Oscar bitterly. "Chicago was a fine town when I rolled out of bed. Now," said Oscar, "it ain't. Where do we go? New York?"

"Still a fine town," said Mr. Maddox, watching the clouds. "The lice crawling over it need dusting, but the town is good. We'll stick around."

"Joe, this is trouble." Oscar's voice had thinned off with positive alarm.

Mr. Maddox turned from the window without expression. "Mike Morton needs help. We might as well stick around and do what we can."

Oscar exploded. "Help that guy? Help Mike Morton?"

Mr. Maddox turned to a table against the wall and built a short scotch and soda.

"I looked at the white clouds," Mr. Maddox mused across the straw-colored bubbling drink. "I had a dream." Mr. Maddox rolled a small swallow around his mouth and swallowed slowly, enjoyably. "I dreamed Mike Morton was a good guy once."

"If I had brains, Joe, I'd pack and lam after hearing that!" Oscar went to the table and took a hard shot straight from the bottle. He gagged, coughed and set the bottle back with a thump.

"Brains," Oscar said bitterly. "I've got mush for brains. I don't pack. I don't lam. So now what?"

"Breakfast; then telephone calls," decided Mr. Maddox. "Long-distance calls, including Ramon Gonzalez in Mexico City."

"Why Mexico?"

"We'll have to fish without bait and see what we hook."

"I know what's hooked. We're hooked," said Oscar dismally. "What happened?"

"I met a lady."

Oscar groaned. "A dame! I mighta known."

"She had news."

"They always got something."

Oscar stood there and listened cynically

to what Sheila Young had told Mr. Maddox. Room Service interrupted with breakfast and the morning papers. Mr. Maddox ate by the sunny windows with gusto, making a minor rite of food, chilled juice and hot black coffee.

Oscar, long resigned to Joe Maddox' vast satisfaction with good food, hunched in an armchair and scanned the newspapers. Finally Oscar tossed the papers to the floor and moved restlessly about the room.

"Joe, the papers are loaded with that race tomorrow. They're giving it to Morton's horse."

"It's the build-up for the movie," Mr. Maddox said calmly.

"Front pages, sports, amusement, society pages have got it for a sure thing. Know what that means?"

"Do you?" Mr. Maddox countered.

"Even grandmaw will unlock her purse and carry a deuce around to the corner bookie. It means big dough rolling on that race."

"Heavy money in Chicago," Mr. Maddox agreed. He was pouring more coffee. He set the metal pot down and regarded Oscar thoughtfully. "Suppose this same bang of publicity blasts all over the United States? It could make high-rolling hustlers like Ganzel and Sutton drool at the thought," said Mr. Maddox, buttering toast. "Get on those telephones and work the list. See what we can dig out on those two."

Oscar stared. "All the list?"

"Our best in every town."

Oscar hoisted eyebrows and whistled softly. There were two telephones on a long salesman's sample table pushed against the wall. Oscar hung his coat on a straight-backed chair and rolled up his sleeves. He pulled a chair to the table, opened a leather-bound address book and lifted both handsets.

Oscar said into the right phone, "Long-distance, Princess." And into the left phone, "Let's go out-of-town, Sugar. And today I got nylons and the fight tickets you wanted." Oscar handled the betting sheets and telephones when Joe Maddox was laying race money. He was generous with hotel switchboard girls who gave him fast, close-mouthed service.

He was placing long-distance calls on

both lines when Mr. Maddox lighted a cigar, rolled his own shirt sleeves and made ready for the calls which shortly would come from all parts of the United States.

CHAPTER THREE

Dobbin In Homicide

EAST COAST calls paid off first. Izzy Yeo, in a nineteenth-floor suite in Philadelphia, might have been in the next room, as his soft voice came clearly over the wire. "Sure, Joe. The papers here are full of Mike Morton's horse. But I haven't picked up anything about this Ganzel or Dink Sutton. What cooks?"

"Strictly quiet, Izzy."

"Sure, Joe." Izzy never broke a confidence.

"A fix could be building, Izzy," Mr. Maddox said curtly.

"No! Not in that stake race!"

"I could be wrong," Mr. Maddox admitted. "It's worth trying to figure the angles."

Izzy Yeo was a sportsman, a gentleman, always angered by any crookedness in any sport. Izzy's clipped promise had an edge. "I'll dig on the quiet, Joe."

Oscar was already pushing the other receiver over. "New York—Duke Staley," Oscar said.

Mr. Maddox spoke more guardedly to Staley. The same publicity had broken in New York. That was all Staley knew at the moment.

Oscar placed more calls. Returns came in faster. Mr. Maddox jotted notes, talked frankly to some, joked, chatted, remained vague and cautious with others.

Oscar spoke past a drooping cigarette. "Word'll circulate about this telephoning when the lay-off money starts passing around." Oscar drew a forefinger across his throat. "If those hoods are trying a fix, they won't like us poking in."

"They don't like us anyway."

Oscar said, "Morton won't have time to make a fix. He's visiting two hospitals with entertainment for crippled kids, speaking at a luncheon, hustling over to a convention of theater owners, and dropping in to see the mayor with a special invite to the *première* tomorrow."

"Ten seconds on a telephone can make a fix," reminded Mr. Maddox grimly. "Get Pop Harvey to a telephone out at the track."

Pop Harvey trained Mr. Maddox' stable of four horses. When Pop called back, Mr. Maddox said, "Pop, I hear Morton's Hotshot is sure-fire tomorrow."

Pop's retort was tart. "Bound to be if he runs on talk. Even Cheney, the jockey, is high on him."

"How high are you?"

"Middlin'," said Pop. "Hotshot's a good hoss. He shipped well by plane from California."

Mr. Maddox chewed the stub of his cigar. "How about Blue Jim, from the Lexfield Farms Stable?"

Pop chortled. "I wondered if you was smart, Joe! If Morton's Hotshot gits to the wire afore that long-legged Blue Jim gelding, he'll be workin' for his oats."

"You think it's that close?"

"Likely to be. But there's a heap of fools handicapping that race with their ears. All they hear is Hotshot."

"Pop, put an eye on Morton's stable."

"Yup," assented Pop, and that was enough. Pop Harvey was an old-timer who knew everyone around the tracks. What Pop couldn't find out among the horse sheds wasn't worth knowing.

"Here's Mexico City," said Oscar, offering the other telephone. . . .

They lunched on sandwiches at the telephones. Track time came. Chicago clients added to the telephone load and were turned down today. Mr. Maddox took time out for a shower and a shave. Oscar's summons broke into the shave.

"Izzy Yeo's on from Philly!"

Mr. Maddox came out of the bathroom fast, towel around his vast middle and lather over half his broad face. He shoved the soapy razor into Oscar's hand and caught the receiver.

"Yes, Izzy?"

"Joe, Billy Beiber's syndicate book in Detroit just called, talking swap. They're guessing I'll have lay-off money on Morton's horse tomorrow."

Lather oozed into Mr. Maddox' mouth. He spat it out.

"What's that?" Izzy said.

"Soap in my mouth!"

"Never chew it myself," observed

Izzy. "You partial to laundry or bath soap?"

"Shaving soap, you dope." Mr. Maddox sobered. "I'll guess too, Izzy. Detroit wants to take lay-off on Morton's horse tomorrow—and they think they'll have money to lay-off on Blue Jim in the same race."

Izzy was astonished. "Did they call you too, Joe?"

"There's an odor," said Mr. Maddox. "It smells like the old one-two. Fix the winner and bet the competition. They take your lay-off money on Hotshot. Then they lay it back with you on the horse which rates to win after the fix goes through."

"The dirty crooks!" said Izzy with unusual violence. "They could tear my bankroll to pieces."

"They could tear racing to pieces," Mr. Maddox reminded. "Millions of movie fans think Mike Morton is the Lord's gift to adventure and romance. If he's caught playing cheap thief, every honest man in racing will get the smear."

Izzy said, "Joe, what do we do?"

"I'll think it over."

Mr. Maddox put the receiver down and stood there barefooted, massive and towel-draped. "The fix is in," he stated with cold certainty. "It's big—and they won't take a chance on an outsider guessing what they're up to. Call Sheila Young at the Stevens."

Oscar called and hung up. "She's out." Oscar jumped up and moved about restlessly. "Joe, let's blow. They've already sent muscle boys around. We start meddling in this and somebody gets whiffed. Guess who?"

"The boys were for not being nice to Mike Morton, bless his dirty crooked heart," said Mr. Maddox blandly. "Get on that phone and find Sheila Young. Pete Morse is her boss. Try the Stevens for him. Or the Chicago office of World-National Films."

MR. MADDIX finished shaving and dressed rapidly. A sense of urgency drove him. His wrist watch said 4:53 when Oscar called from the telephone. "Caught her in the city room of the

Beacon III

Synchronized for Flash Photography

You can't miss with Beacon II and its synchronized flash unit. It's ready day or night . . . and you don't have to be an expert to take perfect pictures. Get those once-in-a-lifetime shots at holiday gatherings . . . pictures you'll treasure the rest of your life.

- Optically ground Doublet Lens, coated on 4 sides
- Fixed focus . . . speed 1/50 or time
- Takes brilliant color or black and white
- Gives amazing detailed fidelity—snaps enlarge up to 8 x 10
- Flash unit takes all size bulbs . . . flash tester prevents duds

Available at all Camera Stores

See specially Designed Beacon II Accessories



WHITEHOUSE PRODUCTS, INC.

360 Furman Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.



Herald! You can have her right now.”

Mr. Maddox got to the telephone fast and made his point equally fast. “Sister, you were right! I’ll pick you up in front of the *Herald* building. Be there?”

The pinched look might have been suddenly at her mouth corners again. A pinched note was in Sheila’s reply. “I’ll be waiting.”

She was at the curb, wearing the same rough-spun linen. She stepped into the taxi and said to Mr. Maddox, “So it is true?”

“Seems so. Who was the woman who overheard the talk on the train?”

“I didn’t say it was a woman; and it won’t get out from that source and hurt Mike.”

“Mike be damned! We’re not worrying about Mike Morton. Did you think this was merely tiddley-winks which Mike might lose?”

She swallowed. “It could finish him in pictures.”

“He’ll be lucky if that’s all,” said Mr. Maddox shortly. “Mike’s hoodlum pals play for keeps.”

Sheila swallowed again.

Mr. Maddox informed her, “Anyone who might talk is poison on a deal like this. Now who heard that talk in Morton’s stateroom?”

“It was a girl,” Sheila admitted. “Lorraine Gaile—real name, Gertrude Dissenberger. She’s a Chicago girl. I don’t know what she’s been doing today.”

“Your office should know.”

“She’s not with the studio any more. Her option wasn’t picked up.” Sheila brushed at her skirt. “I’m soft about Chicago kids who get the Hollywood yen like Mike and I did. I even arranged for the publicity department to send her out several times with Mike. Local boy who made good gives a hand to local girl who followed in his footsteps.”

“Why didn’t you print what happened to the first girl who followed him to Hollywood?” suggested Mr. Maddox dryly.

Her quick look had resentment. “I told you to lay off.”

Mr. Maddox shrugged. “So she’s off the payroll—but she traveled with your party?”

Sheila opened a green plastic vanity

and freshened her scarlet mouth. She spoke jerkily between dabs of the lipstick. “I wangled it so she could come home in style. That’s why she came to me with what she’d overheard. But when she stepped off the train yesterday, she bowed out.”

“No talk to anyone else?”

“Lorraine promised not to.” Sheila fished in her cluttered purse and brought out a small memo book. “She’s at her sister’s house on the North side. Near Lincoln Park. Sister and husband are in Canada on their vacation.”

“Let’s go talk to her.”

“I can’t. We won’t stop until this *première* is over. I’m due back at the office now.”

Mr. Maddox reached in the front of his coat for one of the thick black cigars, made to his order in Havana. “Too bad,” he said, running the rich tobacco under his nose for a connoisseur’s instant of appreciation. “I thought we were trying to help Mike Morton.”

Sheila’s gesture confessed resignation to the fact. “I’ll go,” she said, and looked for the address.

It was an old gray stone house in a block-long row of old gray stone houses. Each front exactly like every other front in the block. A hand’s-breadth of open porch. Steps down to a basement entrance.

The taxi waited. Mr. Maddox’ punch at the bell set off a clear ring inside. Then again. And again.

Sheila said, frowning, “I should have telephoned.” She stood, eyes down in thought, as Mr. Maddox tried the bell again. Her quick stoop, her low exclamation were surprising. So was the inch-long cork-tipped cigarette end she picked up.

Mr. Maddox said, “Shooting snipes?” His bland flash of humor went away as he saw her lips go taut and eyes narrow.

The cigarette was a thick oval, evidently custom-made from the two heavy gold-monogrammed letters near the cork tip. Sheila Young sensed his keen look and turned the cigarette over in her fingers hiding the letters.

Mr. Maddox said blandly, “Double ‘M’ on that cigarette means Mike Morton, doesn’t it?”

She hesitated and shrugged. "Mike passes them out. Loraine probably brought a handful home."

"Dropped it while she was ringing to get in, no doubt," Mr. Maddox remarked dryly. He saw her flush as he put a big finger on the bell button and held it there. "If we have to be kill-joys, we have to," he decided. "Local boy seems to be following local girl's footsteps this time."

Sheila said in a husky note of bitterness, "I might have known the little fluff would try anything to get back to Hollywood. And believe me, brother, she'll hear it from me."

Sheila hammered the door and caught the knob and turned it and shook it. The unlocked door opened to her push.

"Nice," said Sheila. "Shall we bring a little light and truth into this cozy rat nest?"

She walked in and Mr. Maddox followed her. Sheila opened a door on her left with suppressed violence and walked into a living room.

"Loraine! Mike!" she called sharply. "This is Sheila Young!"

It was a quiet living room with an old-rose carpet, and the light seeped dimly, restfully through window shades pulled three-quarters down.

"Loraine!" Sheila called again, halting under the center chandelier.

Mr. Maddox pulled the heavy dark cigar from his mouth in a quick motion which spilled gray ash on the rug.

"Stay where you are!" he directed, going by her to curtained French doors standing open between the living room and dining room.

He'd sighted high-heeled kid pumps and neat ankles and calves in flesh-colored silk on the dining room floor, just inside the doorway, to the left. The rest of her sprawled back out of sight.

THE light was dimmer in the dining room. Mr. Maddox flicked a wall switch. Then she lay at his feet in pallor and dreadful limpness, a delicately modeled blonde with a small waist and silky ash-blonde hair waved back.

Sheila's strangled, "Oh, my Lord!" broke at Mr. Maddox' elbow.

He caught her arm. It felt steel-tight in shock from that gruesomely congested

face on the floor. A chair had been knocked over against the wall. Blood had seeped from a bruised cut on the back of her left hand.

"She was good looking," Mr. Maddox said absently. He stooped with a small grunt to an empty tumbler under the edge of the table. At the last instant he caught himself, whipped out a handkerchief and gingerly lifted the glass and set it on a yellow plastic tray resting near the edge of the table. The tray held a jigger glass, siphon bottle, moisture-beaded copper ice bucket with cubes melting, and a half-empty bottle of Irish whiskey.

Mr. Maddox glanced down at the body. Balling the handkerchief in a big palm, he bent over the empty glass. He put the thick cigar on the table edge and stepped to the body.

He knelt, lifted the girl's hand and let it drop. He placed palms on the rug edge and bent forward, low, over the congested face, down, almost touching it.

"Don't!" Sheila gasped. "Are you trying to k-kiss her?"

Mr. Maddox heaved up, his broad face stone-hard and eyes bright with a chill, sledging knowledge. "Stop that before you blow your top," he ordered in a low voice.

Digging nails made red crescents in her palms. Her deep breath was shuddery, wire-tight. Slowly her thin, intelligent face became composed.

"Sorry," she said quietly.

Mr. Maddox took the cigar from the table edge. He used the ash-covered tip to indicate the empty glass and congested face on the floor.

"She stood there by the tray with her drink. She dropped the glass and spilled most of it, on the rug. She had convulsions and knocked the chair over and hurt the back of her hand. Down she went, dead in seconds, I'd say. No other marks of violence on her. An almond smell is on that glass and her mouth. I've heard about that smell. Prussic acid. Perfect for suicide. Kills almost instantly."

"Suicide," said Sheila in a husky whisper. She shivered. Great pity came into her unsteady voice. "I didn't realize it hit her so hard when her option was

dropped. She kept it hidden on the train."

Mr. Maddox said, "Where's the container which held the poison? Why did she need a tray and so many ice cubes in here to get down one swallow of death? And would she wait until Mike Morton called, so he could watch her die? Or did she take that drink, not knowing what was in it?"

Sheila said, "No," thickly.

"Yes," said Mr. Maddox coldly. "Why did you think I had to see her? I told you she was dangerous to those gamblers."

"Not *poison*," Sheila said, gulping. "Mike wouldn't. Anything but poison."

"I'll take that cigarette butt," said Mr. Maddox in a tone which stopped any argument. He tucked it in his pigskin billfold and looked at the yellow plastic tray. "I'll lay any odds there were two glasses," he said. "The other glass was carried away or washed and put back with clean ones. Go out and sit in the taxi. I'll call the police."

Sheila said miserably, "You'll have Mike arrested for murder?" Sheila bit hard on her scarlet lower lip. She had a drained, white look. "I thought you'd give Mike a break. I didn't know you hated him."

Mr. Maddox wheeled her about by an elbow. He urged her into the living room and he looked down at her.

"The police would have found that cigarette. Now listen carefully. The taxi driver would remember bringing us here," Mr. Maddox reminded. "The police would have every face in your Hollywood party paraded in front of him. They'd have you quick. They'd want to know why it wasn't reported. We'll do what anyone else would do. We'll tell how I drove you to the Stevens from the track this morning and promised to buy you a drink before dinner and you wanted to include Loraine to cheer her up. Can you remember that? Exactly that? No more?"

Sheila nodded. Before Mr. Maddox could stop her she stood on tip-toe, pulled his broad face down with both hands and kissed him.

Mr. Maddox mumbled startled protest. Sheila was already hurrying out to the taxi. Mr. Maddox rubbed the side of his

mouth and muttered, "A kiss for Mike Morton—and Joe Maddox had to get it."

He was smiling wryly as he started a hurried search before telephoning Homicide.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Horse of Another Color

MR. MADDOX taxied from police headquarters to a Randolph Street grill for coffee and roast beef on rye and to scan the papers.

The headlines were on every corner newsstand.

ACTRESS TAKES POISON

SUICIDE IN FILM PARTY

Mr. Maddox ordered more coffee and sat big and brooding, slowly finishing the sandwich. A napkin slapped his hand wet.

"Cassidy!" Mr. Maddox exclaimed in disgust. He caught the napkin and wiped wrist and hand. "Scram. I've seen too many flatfeet already tonight."

The big Masterton detective sat down opposite, grinning. Cassidy's squarish face went sarcastic as his thick finger indicated the newspapers.

"You dig eight grand from the Hollywood bunch this morning, Joe. Now you dig a body from the same gang."

"It's a gift," confessed Mr. Maddox modestly. "What sewer did you creep from?"

"Tailed you from headquarters. Couple of plainclothes men hooked onto you too." The waiter brought the coffee Mr. Maddox had ordered. Cassidy captured it and dumped in cream. "Are Morton's crooked pals betting on the race tomorrow?" Cassidy slid out abruptly, repeating his question of the morning.

"Ask them."

Cassidy gulped coffee and spoke across the cup. "You got mighty cozy with this Sheila Young. Has she been working with you on the Coast, Joe? Maybe piping fast horse money from the movie bunch your way?"

"Never saw her before this morning."

"Okay if you say so, Joe. Look, bodies are bad; crooked horse races are worse. Wise guys are peddling Morton's horse

for a definitely sure-thing tomorrow."

"World-National Films has spread it."

"The guys doing this ain't chumps, Joe. It smells stinkeroo. Now you and this tasty tomato out of Morton's party come up with a body. If you ain't heard, Sheila Young hung on Morton's vine before he hit Hollywood."

"I've heard."

Cassidy gulped the last of his coffee and stood up. Cassidy's voice deepened with rich friendship.

"Joe, I'm tipping you for old times' sake. If it ain't on the level, don't touch it. Tell me. You'll get the breaks."

"I'll trade you. What I know for what you know."

"Sold."

"The police didn't find a poison container. Looks like suicide. Now give back."

Cassidy grinned. "Sorry, Joe. I don't know anything. But this helps. Thanks, sucker."

Chuckling, Mr. Maddox stood up. "That's what I thought. Thanks for admitting it. I'm turning in. Bad dreams to you. . . ."

Mr. Maddox had the dreams. A luscious blonde gave him a generous scotch which tasted slightly of bitter almond. Then the smirking blonde rang an electric bell while Joe Maddox died painfully.

Mr. Maddox found himself sitting up in bed. The telephone bell was ringing at his elbow and the bright sun was shining outside his window. A harried voice that identified itself as Pete Morse jabbed from the receiver.

"Sheila didn't return to her hotel last night. I'm told she left police headquarters with you."

"She took a taxi," Mr. Maddox recalled.

"Well, where is she now?"

Mr. Maddox said the first thing that came to mind. "Meet me in the lobby of Morton's hotel in thirty minutes. . . ."

Mike Morton's suite at the Ambassador East was strictly unlisted, hidden away. Mr. Maddox might have wasted all morning trying to get past the suite door which opened for Pete Morse.

The well-dressed broad-shouldered young man in the doorway had a bent nose, cauliflower ear and a narrowing look

at Mr. Maddox' bulk. He was Patsy Radigan, bodyguard, companion, stooge.

"Mike ain't out of bed yet, Mr. Morse. He don't wanna see this guy any time."

In the lobby Pete Morse had heard a level-spoken hint or two which turned him almost green with fright about his multi-million-dollar movie and its star, Mike Morton. Now he said almost savagely, "Wait outside here with me, Patsy, and no argument, or I get Julius Longberg out of bed in L. A. with a fast phone call." Julius Longberg was president of World-National Films, owner of a world-famous racing stable, a fair and kindly man until provoked. Then the Longberg rages were colossal and devastating.

Patsy Radigan said sullenly, "I dunno." He looked worried. "Mike ain't gonna like this, but if it's front office. . . ." He stepped out into the corridor.

Mr. Maddox went in, shut the door and both men were locked out. He scarcely glanced at the ivory-finished brocaded elegance of the big room as he passed into the suite.

Mike Morton, wearing gorgeous gold and blue hand-screened silk pajamas, was propped against bed pillows, scanning the morning papers, when Mr. Maddox' bulk stalked in and slammed the bedroom door.

Mr. Maddox advanced to the bed. "Where's Sheila Young?"

Mike Morton twisted his legs over the bed edge. "How do I know where Sheila is? Where's Patsy Radigan? How'd you get in here?"

"Sheila's gone. Wasn't at her hotel last night."

Mike Morton swore softly. He licked his lips. "Something happened to her?"

"What else?"

The famous sinister jaw was stubbled this morning. The ash-gray eyes were cloudy with sudden worry. "I need a drink on that," Mike Morton muttered.

He padded in bare feet to a long low chest of drawers. A top drawer yielded a pint of rye. Morton's hand was unsteady as he gulped hard from the bottle.

"Sheila isn't the kind to just vanish. Are the police on it?"

"They will be. You get your chance first to deliver."

Mike Morton looked astonished. "Why me? And what the hell brought you here

asking me all about where Sheila is?"

"The Gaile girl was poisoned. You were there before we were. Want me to call the cops and prove it?"

MIKE MORTON lifted the bottle again. This time his hand visibly shook. "She was dead when I got there." His voice was strained. "Got me, haven't you? How much does it cost?"

"Where's Sheila?"

"I'd like to know worse than you. Sheila got me my break in pictures when I was a bum hooper here in Chi."

"You're still a bum," said Mr. Maddox coldly. "The Gaile girl told Sheila about the fix you and your pals were planning on the train. Now the Gaile girl is dead and Sheila's missing."

Mike Morton creased his forehead. "That kidding? Sheila said something about it. I told her my horses run straight."

"Last year at Bay Meadows your gelding Bold Boy lost by a head after his jockey chucked the whip in the stretch and got by with it," Mr. Maddox said evenly. "The Frisco books took a beating that race. The slick guns in your box that day were betting the longshot who won. I checked on them. Don't talk straight racing to me."

"Before anybody, Maddox, I bet Bold Boy and thought the rest did."

"Then you're a fathead, playing phony tough with those hardboiled grifters you run around with."

A tin of the cork-tipped cigarettes, king-size, gold monogrammed, was open beside the telephone. Mike Morton lighted one. He had a drawn look as he blew smoke with his words. "All right, a phony," he agreed jerkily. "It paid off. Made me a character. You've got me over a barrel about this dead girl. She telephoned me. Said if I didn't want to be washed up in pictures to get to her house quick and alone. I found her on the floor and got out quick."

"Tell anyone?"

"Am I dumb?"

"Yes!" said Mr. Maddox. "She had enough on you about that race today to bring you running."

Morton's denial was angry. "Don't tell me one girl is dead and one missing

over something which never existed. Last year I grossed, with radio, over three hundred grand. I'm good for at least five more years. I like the racket and dough too well to risk any of it."

"Then you're a meat-head like Sheila Young thought," Mr. Maddox said coldly. "Too fat-brained to guess your crooked pals would take you when it paid them enough."

"Sheila thought that?"

"She saw it coming."

"I don't believe it," said Mike Morton shakily. "I went to school with Eddy Ganzel."

"Eddy's slot-machine racket isn't Sunday School. Eddy didn't claw into it by making faces at a camera and strutting in public."

Mike Morton reddened. "You've raw-hided enough!" He jammed the cigarette hard into a glass ash tray on the bedside table. "If Eddy has hurt Sheila, I'll break him with my own hands."

Mr. Maddox was not impressed. He stood in ominous calm as Morton snatched off the gaudy pajamas and feverishly dragged on clothes.

A thought sent Mr. Maddox to the telephone. He called Oscar. "Tell Izzy that Mike Morton's horse will be trying. Take bets on that basis."

"Everything?" Oscar demanded uneasily.

"Try to lay-off any money bet on Morton's horse. I'm with Mike Morton in case something happens."

When they stepped out of the suite, Pete Morse and Patsy Radigan closed on them. Mike Morton waved the two back. "I'm busy," he snapped and kept going.

"Mike, you can't go out today in old clothes and no shave," Pete Morse objected, keeping step. "What gives about all this?"

Mike Morton wheeled. His finger punched Pete Morse's chest. "I like you, Pete, but keep out of this. Patsy, get back in the suite. Don't answer any phone calls."

Pete Morse pleaded under his breath, "I got worries, Mike. The *première*. The race. This needs Julius Longberg's attention."

"Want me in a cell for murder?"

Pete Morse gulped hard. "Don't tell

me that Maddox was right about that!"

"Just keep out, Pete. Keep out."

An elevator dropped them alone. Mr. Maddox missed the address Mike Morton tossed to the taxi driver. He rode watching Morton's hands slowly clench and unclench. He looked out at street corners they passed. Grand Avenue . . . Milwaukee Avenue . . .

"Where are we going?" Mr. Maddox demanded abruptly.

Mike Morton said, thin-lipped, "I've got a hunch about Sheila. If I'm wrong, we'll start the police looking and I'll take what comes."

IT WAS a corner house of old red brick and grimy white paint flaking off window trim, a block off Milwaukee Avenue. Morning traffic was shuttling past.

Mike Morton told the driver to wait, and as they went up the worn front steps he said to Mr. Maddox, "An old lady lives here. Respectable as hell if you don't know her record. Eddy keeps the joint for a hideaway and big dice and poker games upstairs now and then. I've been to a couple. The precinct cops don't even suspect."

He turned a bell handle in the middle of the weathered door. A bell jangled loudly on the other side. Morton gnawed at his lower lip as he waited.

The door opened two inches on a chain. A wrinkled face peered at them.

Mike Morton lifted the sunglasses. "Okay, Maisie. Eddy here yet?"

She unhooked the chain and spoke archly. "I wasn't expecting you, Mr. Mike." She had on a cerise wrapper and red bedroom slippers with white fur pom-

pons. Her white hair was up in curlers and last night's lipstick gave a macabre look to the wrinkled simper. "I look like a floozie this early in the morning." She estimated Mr. Maddox' prosperous bulk.

"Haven't I seen you somewhere, dearie?"

"Possibly, madam; I've been there," said Mr. Maddox blandly.

He was watching Mike Morton glance into the living room and up the stairway and ask, "Anyone here, Maisie?"

"Dearie, no." A door closing upstairs brought another nervous simper. "Not officially," she mumbled and winked.

Mr. Maddox' casual blandness came idly. "Who's watching her, Maisie?"

"A couple of Eddy's—" She clapped a blue-veined hand to the stale rouge on her mouth.

Mike Morton clipped out, "It was a good hunch, Maddox," and bolted up the stairs.

Mr. Maddox went after him.

Old Maisie shrieked, "Don't go up there!"

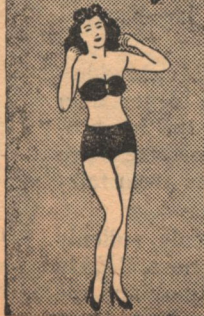
A masculine voice upstairs shouted, "Who's here, Maisie?"

The long steep stairs were narrow, turning sharply to the right near the top. Mike Morton had never rushed stairs faster in any of his hard-hitting movies. He tossed the sunglasses back as he raced up around the stair turn. Beyond him a surprised voice blurted, "It's Mike Morton! No visitors. Eddy ordered it."

Morton's feet pounded up.

The voice cried, "Jack. Quick." That curdled-cream voice was familiar. Mr. Maddox' broad face hardened with anticipation as he ran up the stairs after Mike Morton. He heard a gasping oath. The

Oh! Boy! What a Shape! It's The Caboose



#99— $\frac{1}{8}$ actual size. Also with straight stem
—#98. Antique or plain.

\$3.50

CERTIFIED
PUREX

Genuine Imported Briar! Aluminum Fittings! Solid rubber bit.

Send for "Pipes for a World of Pleasure"

L & H STERN, INC. • Dept. PF-12, 56 Pearl St., B'klyn 1, N. Y.



house shook as bodies crashed against a wall. Mr. Maddox shouldered around the stair turn.

Mike Morton was grappling with the beak-nosed man who had called on Joe Maddox. Blood streaked Morton's mouth as he broke back, hooked a left to the man's middle and mashed the sharp nose almost flat with a terrific right.

Morton was rushed by the younger, swarthy man who had also called on Joe Maddox. He pivoted and was late. A sledging gun barrel went by his upflung arm, knocking him reeling into Mr. Maddox' rush over the top step.

Mr. Maddox' charging bulk hurled Mike Morton on ahead of him. The swarthy face had tight purpose as the automatic muzzle cut around. A sweep of Mike Morton's groggy arm deflected it. The shot blast missed Mr. Maddox' shoulder. His own sweeping left hand knocked the gun up. His massive right hand thrust wide open against the swarthy face.

Gripping cheekbones and face, Mr. Maddox slammed the head back into the wall with all the force of his charging bulk.

They piled there against the wall. Mr. Maddox slammed the head again and again to the old rock-hard plaster. He caught the gun arm above the wrist, let go of the swarthy face, and smashed an uppercut which bounced the head off the wall with a dull thud. He stripped the blued automatic from slack fingers as the glassy-eyed young man sagged to the floor.

The beak-nosed man, bleeding from his mashed nose, was trying to break away from Mike Morton's grip. Mr. Maddox caught him by the neck, dragged him away and shook him into gasping helplessness.

"Got a girl up here?" Mr. Maddox panted.

Behind a closed door toward the front of the hall, a muffled familiar voice cried, "Mike—are you hurt?"

Mr. Maddox threw a sardonic look at blood oozing from Mike Morton's scalp and bruised mouth.

"You look like a hero," Mr. Maddox panted. "Get her out so we can unscramble this." He called down the stairs: "Let that telephone alone, Maisie."

MIKE MORTON drove the door open with his shoulder and came back with Sheila. They had said only a word or two. Morton was dabbing a red-smear handkerchief at his head. Sheila looked tired. Her white linen was wrinkled, as if she had slept in her clothes.

Mr. Maddox had taken a revolver off his prisoner. He shoved the man to a seat on the floor, shoulders against the wall.

"What happened?" Mr. Maddox asked Sheila.

"These two men were behind me when I paid off my driver at the hotel last night. That one, sitting there, showed me a detective's badge. He said I was needed for a few minutes to identify a prisoner. It sounded reasonable. The other one was driving. They brought me here."

Mike Morton's soft growl inquired, "Did they hurt you?"

Sheila's indifference held him off. "I had time to think of Loraine," said Sheila coolly. "Nice friends you have, Mike. Get in their way and they bury you."

Mr. Maddox had regained breath. He eyed the older man on the floor, who was holding handkerchief to bleeding nose. The younger swarthy one was still out.

"These two friendly characters probably would have murdered you the same as Loraine Gaile," Mr. Maddox told Sheila thoughtfully. Just as thoughtfully he held a match to a black cigar. "This kidnapping, plus fixing the race, will make it easy for the D. A. to start these two toward the chair for killing Loraine Gaile."

Mike Morton opened his mouth and closed it when he caught the glint in Mr. Maddox' look.

Sheila asked, "Has Eddy Ganzel talked?"

Mr. Maddox chuckled, "What do you think?" His broad smiling face carried conviction.

"It got away from Eddy," Mr. Maddox told Sheila. "It turned out bigger than his local slot-machine racket and his protection. Eddy made his big mistake when the girl was killed to keep her from talking about the race."

The seated man said suddenly, sullenly past the handkerchief at his nose, "Eddy can't shake that killing off. Jack and me waited down the street in the hack when

Eddy went in to see her. We know that."

Mr. Maddox said dubiously, "What the D. A. does with that is his business." He handed the automatic to Mike Morton. "Watch them while Sheila and I step downstairs. I'll send the old lady up."

In the living room downstairs, Mr. Maddox pulled thoughtfully on the cigar and studied Sheila. "It worked," he said. "Those goons will convict Ganzel. You've got Mike where you want him, sister."

"I don't want him."

"Up to you," said Mr. Maddox indifferently. "He's clean on Loraine Gaile's

real-life hero, who spotted crooked work and broke it. This is your chance, sister—do we make Mike bigger or break him?"

Sheila stood without moving. The color was still in her face. "What did Mike say when he heard I was missing?" Sheila asked dreamily.

THAT afternoon at Arlington Park Mr. Maddox put down a double-scotch in the clubhouse bar, and a heavy hand smote his back. Choking, Mr. Maddox swung around.



death. I thought all along he was. He wouldn't have dropped that cigarette end so carelessly if he'd had murder on his mind. And he didn't have anything to do with snatching you."

Color was in Sheila's cheeks. "I'm not so sure."

"Mike remembered this hideout which belongs to Eddy Ganzel. Mike had a hunch you might be here. If you weren't here, Mike wanted the police on it fast, no matter what happened to him."

Sheila shrugged.

"You can have Mike a heel or a hero," said Mr. Maddox blandly. "It swings on what I say to the police in a few minutes."

"What about Mike's crooked horse race?"

Mr. Maddox glanced at his wrist watch. "If Mike's horse wins that race this afternoon, I could be persuaded it was all planned behind Mike's back, and he knows nothing of it, as he claims."

"But if Mike doesn't know what has been done about the race, how can he stop it?"

"That," said Mr. Maddox, "is Mike's worry. I can advise him. He could be a

"Mike Morton's Hotshot was three-to-five on the board a minute ago," Cassidy said.

Few in the great crowd would have guessed what Cassidy meant. Newspapers so far had printed nothing of the morning's trouble. Police were questioning suspects in outlying precincts. Ganzel and Sutton had been quietly gathered in.

There had been a brief tense meeting between the track stewards, Mike Morton and Mr. Maddox. A few minutes ago the loudspeakers announcing a last-minute jockey change on Mike Morton's horse had caused a ripple of surprise.

Masterton Agency detectives had been quietly guarding Mike Morton's horse for hours. New faces had been substituted for Morton's trainer and stable crew. But the "fix" could have been an inconspicuous slow-down pill administered in the morning feed, or any of a score of subtle methods. The stewards had almost ordered the horse scratched to remove any doubt.

Mike Morton had argued against it. "Let my horse run and settle it."

Cassidy, as a Masterton detective,

knew all that, and more. "Joe, I just telephoned our office in town. Eddy Ganzel has admitted rubbing out the girl. She got smart and tried to cut in on Eddy for a chunk of cash. Eddy went out to fix her. She threatened to telephone Mike Morton. Eddy told her to go ahead. She did. Then Eddy let her have it in a drink and got out, taking the glass he'd been drinking from."

They were moving slowly through the crowd, Cassidy talking under his breath.

"If Morton's horse loses, he'll be a bum to everyone who bet on his horse. But if he wins, Joe, it'll make a bum out of you. We hear your book took big bets on Morton's Hotshot this morning before the fix was uncovered. It'll cost you plenty to pay off, even at low odds-on price."

Mr. Maddox nodded, stiffening as the starting bell loosed the crowd roar . . . "They're off!"

Cassidy said with the cheerfulness of a concerned undertaker, "Let's go up to Mike Morton's box and see who gets hurt—you or Morton."

The driving rush of horses was around the clubhouse turn when they reached the box where Mike Morton sat with Sheila Young. Morton had insisted on sitting alone with Sheila. He turned with annoyance when Cassidy stepped into the box, and then gave Mr. Maddox a twisted grin with bruised lips and indicated empty chairs.

Sheila beckoned Mr. Maddox into the front row beside her. She had a smart demure look now. One had to be as close as Mr. Maddox to guess worry back in her eyes as she watched the horses stringing out on the backstretch.

The loudspeakers called it ". . . Blue Jim is leading by two lengths, Cacola second by a length, Hotshot third, . . ."

Sheila shook her head sadly.

Mr. Maddox spoke to her. "Fritz Myers is a good jockey. Sit tight."

The loudspeakers gave no comfort as the leaders surged into the stretch turn. ". . . Blue Jim by three lengths, Hotshot second, Burnish third and saving ground. . ."

Mr. Maddox wiped his broad face as the leaders swung into the stretch. Now the long straight stretch was ahead and

Myers began swinging the leather bat hard.

The crowd began to shout and surge up from seats. Mr. Maddox sat calmly. There was not much time to make up ground.

"Blue Jim by a length. . . ."

Both jockeys were whipping hard. Hotshot's nose drew ahead of Blue Jim's neck and hung there as the two horses locked stride for stride.

Mr. Maddox wiped his face again. A turfman would know that a finish like this was no part of a fix. Blue Jim was winning on speed and heart. But thousands who had bet Hotshot would never believe it after the details of Eddy Ganzel's work came out.

Fritz Myers seemed to go far forward, to gather himself and the reins without missing a stroke of the whip. It looked as if Myers gathered his mount with sheer intensity and hurled him an extra stride into the lead under the wire.

Until Hotshot's number flashed in the winning spot there was doubt. Then a roar shook the stands. Even Cassidy sounded happy.

"That saves Morton's bacon, Joe. But it sure fried yours. How much does this cost you?"

Mr. Maddox turned in the chair. "Keep it a secret?"

"Why not? I'll enjoy it most."

"Oscar laid everything bet on Morton's horse off with Izzy Yeo in Philadelphia. Izzy laid it off in Detroit, where they were working on Ganzel's fix and betting Blue Jim back for a clean-up. We took the Blue Jim money. We keep it all. About forty thousand profit."

What Cassidy said back, Mr. Maddox missed. Sheila had leaned over, her eyes shining.

"It used to be a wonderful town, Joe Maddox. It still is—and thanks."

Mr. Maddox patted her hand and glanced up at the blue sky, where the white clouds drifted like dreams off the lake. Sheila had turned to Mike Morton, who reached for her, not caring who saw. He'd been a good guy once. In that moment Mr. Maddox would have laid at least even money Mike Morton would stay good now. Sheila would see to it.

I TAKE THIS DOOM



SHE'S lying in there on the bedroom floor now. Mysterious in death as she was in life. The strange, glamorous Barbee who dazzled me six short months ago, whispering one evening that she just wanted to be my very ordinary wife. She tried, painfully. But for Barbee, being ordinary was something foreign.

I remember the moments of her smile, so enchanting, so warm and friendly, yet so furtive, with some invisible evil out of

There was an automatic in her hand and she was firing past me.

By **RAYMOND
DRENNEN, Jr.**

*All of glamorous Barbee's past had to be unshrouded—
before I could learn why she chose death the matrimonial way.*

the past hovering to strike without warning. Two people never loved each other quite as much as Barbee and I . . . nor quite as hopelessly. From the first, there was a sealed wall around her, guarding secrets she forbade me to know.

Her veiled words when I first met her, gay and innocent then, took on a meaning of terror over the months of our marriage. "I think I'll like you, Ross, but don't ever ask any questions about me. You wouldn't like what you found out."

Now, the constant horror is gone. I don't know her secret, but I can never forget the lurking terror in her eyes, the shadow of fear as it crossed her mouth. As I sit here in the dark of our apartment, I am vowed that I shall find and destroy that which killed her. . . .

My name is Ross Ranney. I'm an accountant for an insurance company. It's Friday evening and I just got home a half hour ago. On my way to the apartment, I stopped at the liquor store to pick up a bottle of gin and some mixer. We were expecting a couple over this evening to play bridge.

I found Barbee where she is now, lying on the floor of our bedroom. The butcher knife from our kitchen is plunged deep into her white chest, and her blood has gushed out, staining the housecoat she's wearing. It's aqua, one I gave her last Christmas. There doesn't appear to have been any struggle. Her eyes are closed and her face has a look of serenity which I've never noticed before. Almost as though she were glad the silent dread she carried in her heart can no longer trouble her.

If only I had something tangible to go on. Scraps of information. Bits of gossip dropped here and there. Casually sometimes, then sometimes with shock and real terror. But all of it trivial and insignificant, because the agreement was never to ask questions. And Barbee never told.

I remember the key, hanging on the nail by the door. I'd found it one morning, mixed with my things on the bureau. Barbee had taken it, flushed a little, said:

"I'll hang it here so we won't lose it. It's a key to a safe deposit box. Mr. and Mrs. Smith is the name, Ross. You're Mr. Smith. If I ever get lost, or anything, you go down and take what's there."

Well, Barbee is lost now. Maybe whatever is in that safe deposit box will tell me where she's gone. First, I've got to call the police. How do you do that? Have you ever had to call the police to report the murder of your wife?

* * *

Three months of hell, and it's only started. An open charge of murder. They'd come for me at any time of the day or night and question me for hours that stretched to eternity. One time I didn't have my clothes off for seventy-two hours and nothing but black coffee and cigarettes to keep me awake. *They couldn't believe I didn't know who my wife was, where she'd come from!*

"Your fingerprints were on the knife, killer!"

Sure, I'd touched the handle of the butcher knife. My first, hysterical reaction had been to tear it out of her. But I didn't.

"You were drunk, Ranney!"

I must have fainted after I touched the knife, or came close to it. I drank several pretty stiff slugs of gin to make lights come back to my eyes while I was waiting for the police. I suppose I was drunk when they got there, but it wasn't only the liquor that made me that way.

Reasonable doubt, they said. I hired a lawyer, a guy by the name of Kleinsmith. He's a sharp criminal lawyer who knows the ropes and sells what he knows at a high price. He got me off. Officially, the case is still open, but the police are convinced I did it. They're not looking any further for the murderer. They're waiting for me, while the real murderer walks around loose.

When they let me go, the D. A. said, "I guess we made a mistake, Ranney, but we can't overlook any angle. You understand?"

I understood, all right. I understood the narrow look in his eyes as he watched me. A little later when they let me go, I spotted the detective who trailed my taxi back to the apartment.

After paying the driver, I had forty-six cents left in my pocket. Things in the apartment were pretty much as I'd left them, except, of course, Barbee was gone.

The dark red splotch on the gray rug by the bed made me shudder as I looked at it. All I wanted to do was take my clothes and clear out.

The only thing I kept of Barbee's was a little address book, which I thought might give me some leads. I burned the portrait she'd had made. The one with her shining golden hair hanging to her shoulders and the black gown that made her look so regal. I didn't want anything around that would remind me of her. Anything personal, I mean, that I could smell and feel.

I took the key to the safe deposit box from the nail where she'd hung it, packed my clothes and caught a bus downtown to a cheap hotel. Then I dropped around to the insurance company to see about going back to work.

"Sorry, Ranney," they told me curtly. "We had to fill your job. You understand, under the circumstances."

Yeah, I understood. For the first time, I realized that not only the police, but everybody figured I murdered Barbee. That's when I knew why Kleinsmith had taken all my dough, a little over fourteen hundred dollars. I'd been bitter about it at the time, but now I knew he'd had a tough job getting me off.

I went back to the hotel to think things over. It was something I hadn't counted on. I'd assumed all along I'd have my job back. I had to work to eat, but I'd planned to take as much time off as necessary to find Barbee's murderer.

NEXT was the job of piecing her life together. Finding out the little things that any man always knows about

his wife. Where she came from, what she did before we were married, who her friends were. I didn't even know where she was born, or who her parents were. I realized bitterly that she could have written anything on her marriage license application. I'd have to trace it anyway, see if it was the truth. I was determined to discover the secret in her life that had come back to kill her. I knew I had to discover it, if I ever wanted the world to know that it was possible for two people to love without asking any questions.

That's the way I was feeling when I left the hotel and started for the bank. The safe deposit box, I hoped, would hold a clue. I didn't have any trouble. They matched my signature with the sample card I signed as Ross Smith at Barbee's request, and gave me the box. My heart was pounding at my throat and I almost dropped the thing as I carried it into a little room they gave me.

I looked at it, then I lit a cigarette and closed my eyes before I looked at it again. The box was crammed with money. Neat packets of twenties, fifties, hundreds and five hundred dollar bills. I counted it slowly, staring at each bill incredulously. My hand shook as I added the total. A hundred and eighty thousand dollars in the box!

I broke my nails scratching, trying to find anything else Barbee might have left in the box. Names, a clue to her past, anything that would give me a lead, however slight. It was a fortune in the box, but I'd rather have had a note from her that would help me find her murderer.

Finally, the guard knocked on the door and told me the bank was closing. I

HEADACHE

UPSET
STOMACH

JUMPY
NERVES



RELIEF!

THANKS TO FAMOUS
BROMO-SELTZER

Millions turn to Bromo-Seltzer to relieve ordinary headache *three* ways. It's famous for giving fast help. Caution: Use only as directed. Get Bromo-Seltzer at your drugstore fountain or counter today.
A Product of Emerson Drug Company since 1887.



stuffed some twenties in my pocket, put the rest back and drifted out of the bank.

There were two possibilities. During our brief courtship, before we were married, Barbee had lived at the Fullerton House, a residence club for women. I tried there first.

Their records showed that she had moved in the day after I met her. This surprised me, because I'd always assumed she'd lived there for some time. When we'd made our first date that evening I met her, she hadn't hesitated in giving me the name of the club as her address.

The clerk, a suspicious little character, had an informatnon card which they kept at the desk. It said:

Miss Campbell is never home to anyone except Mr. Ross Ranney.

"What other callers did she have?" I asked.

The clerk squinted at me. "What's your interest, mister?" he asked.

I looked at him, decided swiftly. "I'm a private investigator," I told him.

"Oh," he said. He shuffled some papers, said abruptly. "I don't remember her ever getting a single caller."

"What about this Ross Ranney?"

"I was the day clerk. Ranney always called at night. Maybe the night clerk can tell you something about him, but I never saw him."

I shrugged. At least I figured I could count on the answers he gave me if he was truthful about that. He couldn't tell me where Barbee came from before she moved into the Fullerton House, and he didn't remember her getting any mail. It was a blind lead as far as I was concerned.

The only other one I had was the name of the man who'd introduced us. He was a guy by the name of George Scott, a customers' man for a brokerage house downtown. He'd handled a small trading account for me and the night I'd met Barbee, I'd run into them at the bar of the Congo Club. He was listed in the telephone directory as having an apartment in East 37th Street.

He was drunk when he opened the door and didn't recognize me.

"I'm trying to get a lead on Barbee Campbell," I told him.

Scott weaved against the door jamb and

squinted at me. "Who are you?" he asked.

"Ross," I said. "I'm a private investigator."

He looked at me doubtfully. "She got killed," he told me thickly. "Murdered. Her husband did it. Knew him, too. Fine fellow. Never would have thought it of him."

"Sure," I said drily. "You never can tell."

"Come on in and have a drink, Ross." He turned and I followed him into the living room, feeling vaguely uneasy. "What do you want to know?"

"How you came to meet her. Where she lived."

"Didn't know much about her. Only saw her twice. She came into the office one day, said she had some money to invest. She wouldn't open an account. Said she'd get in touch with me."

Scott sat his drink down, leaned toward me confidentially. I wondered if he was as drunk as he pretended. He whispered hoarsely:

"But I couldn't forget her, Ross. She was the kind you don't forget."

"Yeah," I said.

"I knew I'd hear from her again, and I did. She called me one afternoon and asked me to meet her. At the Congo Club. Met her at the bar. That's where she met her husband. I introduced them."

"What happened?" I asked. I knew what I'd done. Scott had gone off to speak to somebody else after he introduced Barbee and me, and I'd made the date with her for the next day. That's when she'd told me she lived at the Fullerton House. When Scott got back, I left them.

"Nothing happened," he said. "We had dinner and I took her home. She promised to come down to the office and open an account, but she didn't. She married this joe."

"Where'd you take her that night, Scott?" I asked impatiently. He had to tell me that. I had to know if I had to beat it out of him.

Scott looked up, frowned. "Some place in the West 90's. An old brownstone house, it was. Wondered at the time. Just a rooming house." He fumbled in his coat pocket, looked up, grinning. "Customers' book," he said, patting it. "Always keep my customers here."

I waited while he thumbed pages.

"Here it is. 1013 West 91st Street. An old brownstone. You can't miss it."

The uneasy feeling I had made me wonder if he didn't know that address by heart, wonder if he didn't want me to go up there. I made a note of the address, asked:

"What else can you tell me about her?"

"Not a damn thing," he said, trying to be confidential. "Funny thing—" He broke off, peered at me sharply. "You know. . . I know you from some place. But I can't place you."

"Don't strain," I told him, rising.

THE brownstone house on 91st Street was a three-story affair. There was a table in the foyer with a lamp on it and a box nailed on the wall with a lot of cubby holes for mail. One of the boxes was labeled Superintendent.

It was on the first floor back, and I knocked on the door. A heavy woman, who'd had a hard life and showed it, stuck her face out at me.

"Did Barbee Campbell used to live here?" I asked.

The woman wrinkled her face, shook her head.

"Uh, uh," she grunted sourly.

"A blonde girl, with gray eyes," I insisted. "Hundred and ten pounds, five-three, always smiling and laughing. A beautiful girl. She lived here six months ago. You must remember her."

The woman pulled the door wider, stepped closer to me.

"What'd you say her name was? Barbee Campbell?" She asked a little hoarsely.

I nodded.

The woman's voice was a whisper when it came again. "I know the girl you mean. Only she wasn't always smiling and laughing. She never smiled and laughed. Her name wasn't Campbell."

"What was it?"

The woman lowered her head and worked her cracked lips. "When she moved out, she gave me a hundred dollars to forget her. In case anyone like you ever asked."

I curled my lip, but I pulled one of Barbee's twenties out. The old woman eyed it greedily.

"Course, you'd find out anyway," she muttered.

"Sure," I said.

"Name was Shaffer. She shared a room with Carol Morris."

"I want to see Carol Morris," I told her.

"She moved the day after the Shaffer girl left. There was a man asking after her. A big man. Fat and ugly. Had a red scar on his left cheek. Wore a diamond on his little finger big enough to light up the house. I think he was really wanting the Shaffer girl, but I didn't tell him nothing. Said his name was Big Cullen. Told me to tell her if I ever saw her."

"Big Cullen?" I murmured. Then I asked: "Where does the Morris girl live now?"

"I don't know," the old woman snapped. "I saw her on Broadway about a month ago. She went into a hotel at the corner of 80th Street."

Trying some more with the old woman didn't get me anything. My best bet looked like the hotel. Carol Morris, the woman told me, was a tall brunette. Around thirty, which would make her a little older than Barbee.

I got the uneasy feeling almost as soon as I hit the street. Nothing I was sure of, but I thought I was being followed. I turned into a cigar store and scanned the counter while I waited to see who came up.

There was a thin man, wearing a trench coat. He had a thin, gray face. He stopped at the news stand by the subway and took a long time to buy a paper. He shot a glance toward the cigar store, and I knew I'd seen him before. After I left the jail and went back to my apartment house, he'd been in front when I came out and caught the bus down to the hotel. He wasn't the detective who'd tailed me from the jail.

I watched him turn back to the news stand, then I went out the side door and walked toward the Drive. If he followed me, I couldn't spot him, though I wasn't trying to shake him. I was just trying to make sure he was tailing me and get him in a dark corner where I could make him talk. I walked up the Drive for several blocks, then made my way back to Broadway.

Then I took a bus down at 80th Street.

to the hotel where the old woman had seen Carol Morris. I was disappointed that I'd lost him, but as I entered the hotel, I saw him coming out of the drug store on the corner. He spotted me, so I knew he'd wait.

ALTHOUGH the desk clerk didn't recognize the name of Carol Morris, the money looked good to him. I described her and after a lot of phony talk, he told me she was in Room 1520. Another name. I took the elevator.

She opened the door a crack and looked at me. The old woman had given me a good description.

I said bluntly: "You're Carol Morris."

The door started shut fast, but it hit my foot. I put my weight against it. She was breathing hard as I forced it open and she was white as anything I've ever seen. She gave up and moved back as I got in. She crossed her arms on her chest, as in a shudder.

"What do you want?" she whispered hoarsely.

"I'm Ross Ranney," I told her. "Barbee's husband."

Her arms came down slowly and she breathed in jerks, but she didn't say anything.

"I'm after Barbee's murderer," I said. "You're on my list."

She stared at me for a long time, finally took a deep breath and said quietly:

"So, you're Ranney. Barbee said she was through when she got home that night after meeting you. I guess she meant it."

"Through with what?" I demanded.

Carol Morris looked at me incredulously. Suddenly she whirled on her heel, walked to a dresser and pulled open the top drawer. She took out a bottle, poured herself a drink in a glass, stood still a minute with her back toward me, sniffing the liquor. Then she tossed it off, and I saw a shudder run through her as she turned to face me.

"Didn't Barbee ever tell you?" she asked softly.

I shook my head.

"You're fortunate," she murmured. "If I were you, Ranney, I'd forget the whole thing."

I moved toward her slowly. My face was black with anger and my fists were

clenched at my sides. When I came up to her, I took her by the arms and shook her viciously.

"You'll tell me everything you know," I hissed. "Or I'll kill you. . . just like I killed Barbee!"

She was pale as death as she stared at me. Wild lights of fear were dancing in her eyes. She opened her mouth to say something, then closed it, whispered through clenched teeth:

"You didn't kill Barbee!"

"I'll kill you!" I promised.

She tried to control herself, finally muttered: "You might at that."

"What was her name?"

"Her name was Campbell. Barbara Campbell. She was ashamed of it. I don't think she ever used it."

I sucked in breath. "She used it once," I said. "On our marriage application."

Carol shrugged faintly. "She loved you, Ranney."

"Why was she ashamed of it?"

A dry smile crossed Carol's face as she looked at me. "If I tell you," she said dully, "I'll probably be killed."

"If you don't," I assured her, "You'll certainly be killed." And I meant it.

She laughed shortly. "I'll take my chances, mister. I'm not afraid of you, but I know what they can do." She hesitated. "I'll tell you as much as I can. I suppose you have a right to know. But it won't do any good. Barbee shot a man in Tia Juana one time. They saw her do it. That's how they got her into the racket in the first place. That wouldn't have kept her in, though. It was something more than that."

"What was the racket?" I asked.

She looked at me, shrugged slightly. "What's the difference now, Ranney? There's nothing you can do about it and if you keep it up, they'll kill you. Believe me. I know!"

Carol Morris laughed coldly, quickly lifted her dressing gown, revealing her thigh. "Barbee had more guts than I did. They really held something on her, but they just scared me to keep me in. See?"

I looked at the scar. An ugly, crimson scar, eight inches long, with jagged lines crossing and a scar the size of a quarter at the end of each line.

"That's done with a knife and lye and

burning cigarettes, Ranney. That's what they did to keep me in, but when Barbee had the guts to leave, I left too. You see why I don't want to talk? They wouldn't just kill me. They'd work on my face first."

Suddenly I felt cold, looking at her. It had hurt, making those scars.

"Who killed Barbee?" I demanded hoarsely.

The girl shook her head, her eyes drifting distantly. She turned back toward the dresser drawer.

I THINK I sensed the door opening behind me. It was reflected in the glass over the dresser, but I was standing at the wrong angle. I don't know what made me move and look in the mirror, but when I did, I saw him.

He was a big Mexican, bigger than any I've ever seen, a towering hulk with arms hanging low and awkward. He had a heavy, ill-formed face, with a black, uneven mustache. His mouth was twisted and cruel. His huge hand came up slowly as he shuffled noiselessly forward. The black revolver in his hand was pointed at my back.

That's when he moved out of my line of vision. I stood frozen in my tracks. I had no gun, no breath of a chance to use it if I had. As the Mexican moved, Carol caught his reflection in the mirror. A scream of terror started low in her throat. Her hand had been in the drawer after the whiskey bottle, but it came out fast as she whirled. There was an automatic in it and she was firing past me.

I heard the Mexican grunt as I dropped to the floor. The explosion of his gun roared back. I saw the slug catch Carol in the throat, splitting it open. She gurgled horribly, then crumpled. Her trigger finger clutched as she fell, firing one last shot.

It caught the Mexican in the forearm and as I twisted my head, I saw his gun drop from his fingers. He was weaving drunkenly, coming toward me. There was a hole in his head, over his left eye. His twisted mouth hadn't changed and I doubt if he knew he should be dead. I was suddenly galvanized to action, springing to my feet as he stretched out long arms to seize me.

"She won't tell you now!" he grunted.

Whirling, I gathered my fist in low, pushed a hard right into his stomach. It didn't bother him and I had to duck low to escape the swing of his arms as they flayed out for me. Then, he suddenly stiffened, began working his mouth in huge grotesque chops, and pitched forward at my feet, dead.

I swung my head back and forth stupidly. My muscles were numb, my chest held in a band of steel. Gradually, I became aware of muffled sounds in the corridor. People were calling, talking, questioning one another. The sounds came closer, then there was a knock on the door. I knew I had to get out.

There was a window opening onto the fire escape. I ran to it, flung it open. As I crawled out, I heard someone try the knob on the door. I slammed the window shut, ran down the fire escape to the floor below. One window opened into the corridor. I pulled on it, got it open and slipped in. I made my way down an inside stairway to the lobby, hoping the desk clerk wouldn't spot me.

He didn't, but as I pushed through the revolving door, the swinging glass reflected, for an instant, a thin figure in a trench coat. He was standing beside the elevator column, hidden from the lobby, pretending to read a posted notice. He didn't see me leave.

Walking down Broadway, the chill air cleared my numbed senses. I hoped that the murder room would look as though Carol Morris and the Mexican had shot it out, killing each other. I realized dully this was a pretty forlorn hope. The desk clerk couldn't fail to remember me, describe me accurately to the police. Eventually, they'd tie me in.

But this fear was overshadowed by the disappointment I felt at Carol's death. She was my only link, my one sure connection with Barbee's past. With her had died my one chance of unraveling the mystery.

I had a couple of whiskies at a bar on Broadway. They tasted like so much water, but they stopped my hands from shaking. After a while, I left the bar and climbed on a bus. As I rode, I tried to rationalize what I knew.

Barbee had contacted George Scott.

saying she had some money to invest. Apparently she didn't have the money the first time she saw him, or she would have opened an account. Then, on her second meeting with him, she had the money, but she met me. We fell in love during that brief encounter at the bar, and she changed her plans on the spur of the moment.

She disappeared from her former haunts the next day, moving to the Fullerton House. She forbid the desk clerk to admit anyone but me to see her. She discarded her plans to invest the money and put it in a safe deposit box.

Barbee double-crossed the others, took the money and ran out. We were married, and it took them six months to catch up with her. When they did, they killed her that evening. The swift vision of her lovely figure flashed across my mind, and tears came to my eyes as I thought of her.

There had been no struggle in the apartment. She'd just been killed. That led me to believe that she knew and trusted whoever was responsible for her death. At the very least, she didn't suspect they would try to kill her, or she would have fought them off. They must have come after the money, Barbee refused to tell where it was, so they killed her.

From my talk with Carol Morris, I doubted that she was the murderer. She'd liked Barbee, admired her guts in breaking away. She must have known that Barbee had run out with the money, yet she hadn't been bitter.

I was sure that Barbee had been forced to stay in the racket, whatever it was, by some powerful hold over her. She'd killed a man in Tia Juana, and it was a Mexican who'd killed Carol to keep her from telling me anything. Tia Juana is a clearing house for smuggling into the United States. Opium and other narcotics are easily smuggled and they bring large amounts of cash when they're dumped on the underworld market in New York. Maybe Barbee had been a carrier?

The fact that she had killed a man couldn't be used as a threat against her by a criminal, for instance a fellow smuggler. There had to be some better reason, I realized, to hold her in the racket. Carol Morris had even said there was. The only thing I could think of was someone she loved. A husband, father, brother. . . .

She'd had no reason to fear her murderer, or she would have struggled.

IT WAS late when I took the creaky elevator in my hotel to my fourth floor room. I'd walked until I was weary, but my head was clear. I pushed open the door, stepped inside. As I turned on the light, I knew I was not alone.

He was sitting on the edge of the bed. The thin man, with the thin, gray face. He was wearing his trench coat and there was a thin, sardonic sneer on his mouth as he looked at me.

I think a grin spread over my mouth and my heart started pounding as I suddenly realized that here was another end to follow. I had a hunch it was he who'd sent the Mexican up to kill Carol Morris before she could tell me anything. And the thin man could tell me what I'd wanted from Carol. I moved toward him, cautious, ready, and he sat quietly watching me. The low voice behind me drew me up short.

"Easy, Ranney!" it ordered.

I turned stiffly, holding my hands out from my sides. It was the big man, sitting in the wicker chair in the corner. My back had been toward him since I'd stepped in the door. He had a red scar on his left cheek and his face was an ugly brown. He had on a brown hat and a brown coat. His pudgy paw, with a large diamond on its little finger, was still in his lap holding an automatic on me.

Big Cullen! The one the old woman said had been looking for Barbee! Cold sweat burst out on my face as I realized this was the end of the game. One way or another. The man's eyes slid over me.

"What have you done with the money, Ranney?" he demanded quietly.

"What money?" I asked. My voice sounded defiant and steady, but I was curling inside, desperately thinking how I could stall, get out of this room.

The man chuckled deep in his chest.

"It's in a safe deposit box at the bank, Ranney," he told me calmly. "We've followed you since they let you out of jail. We know your every move and we waited outside the bank while you counted it. I trust it's all there. Barbee wouldn't tell us where it was. We shouldn't have killed her. Cam shouldn't have."

Cam! With cold horror, I twisted my head toward the thin man on the bed. "Barbee Campbell!" I echoed hollowly. "Cam! You're her brother!"

The thin man lurched forward, his face turning black with hate.

"Hold it, Cam!" the big man barked. "This lad is going to get the money for us. If he's good about it, we won't kill him. If he objects, we'll have to persuade him like we should have persuaded Barbee."

"You were smuggling," I heard myself saying. "You forced Barbee to carry the stuff into the country for you."

"By plane," the big man said calmly. "They don't search a woman like they do a man. Only, she got ideas. She waited until she got a big load of the stuff that tied up all our money, then after unloading it in New York and collecting the cash, she ran out on us." He gave a chuckle that chilled my blood. "But we found her. Eventually."

That's when it happened. We didn't hear a sound, had no warning. The door suddenly burst open and two men jumped into the room. Their guns were drawn and they converged on Big Cullen in the chair. He was the only one of the three of us who had a gun in sight.

He cursed gutterally, coming to his feet, his gun blazing at the intruders. Their guns roared back at him in blinding flashes.

Instinctively I knew they were on my side—at least, for the time being. Cam had jerked to his feet, his thin fingers clawing out a gun from beneath his coat. I sprang at him, grasping his wrist as it

cleared the coat. I twisted with all the hate in my body, suddenly and viciously, and heard the dull crunch of bone as his forearm snapped and the gun came free.

My eyes were blinded with fury, my brain clouded with hate. I remember vaguely the nightmare of falling to the floor on top of him, beating his face savagely with the gun.

When they pulled me off, I was babbling hysterically at the bloody mass beneath me.

The trial is nearly over now. Hardly more than a formality. When they bring in the sentence of death against Donald Campbell for the murder of his sister, the jury will ring down the black curtain on my life.

Barbee has been cleared, acquitted in the eyes of the world for her part in the opium smuggling operations. It was Donald, her dope addict brother, who killed the man in Tia Juana. Big Cullen, who possessed the evidence to prove it, forced Barbee into the racket under threat to expose her brother. After each smuggling trip, he promised her he wouldn't make her do it any more, until she finally decided there was no hope.

As a last gesture, she hoped to break up the smuggling by fleeing with all the money with which they carried on their operations. She succeeded, but when they found her that evening her brother became enraged and killed her.

The detectives shot Big Cullen to death in my room when they burst in on us.

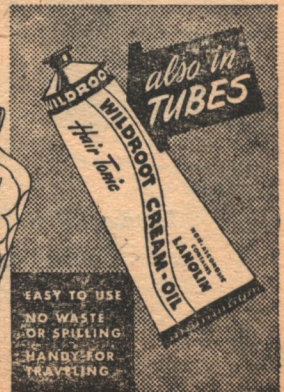
The mystery and terror are gone out of my life now—but it doesn't mean much, since Barbee has gone, too.

MEN CAN HAVE THE NEW LOOK TOO...



WITH WILDROOT CREAM-OIL HAIR TONIC

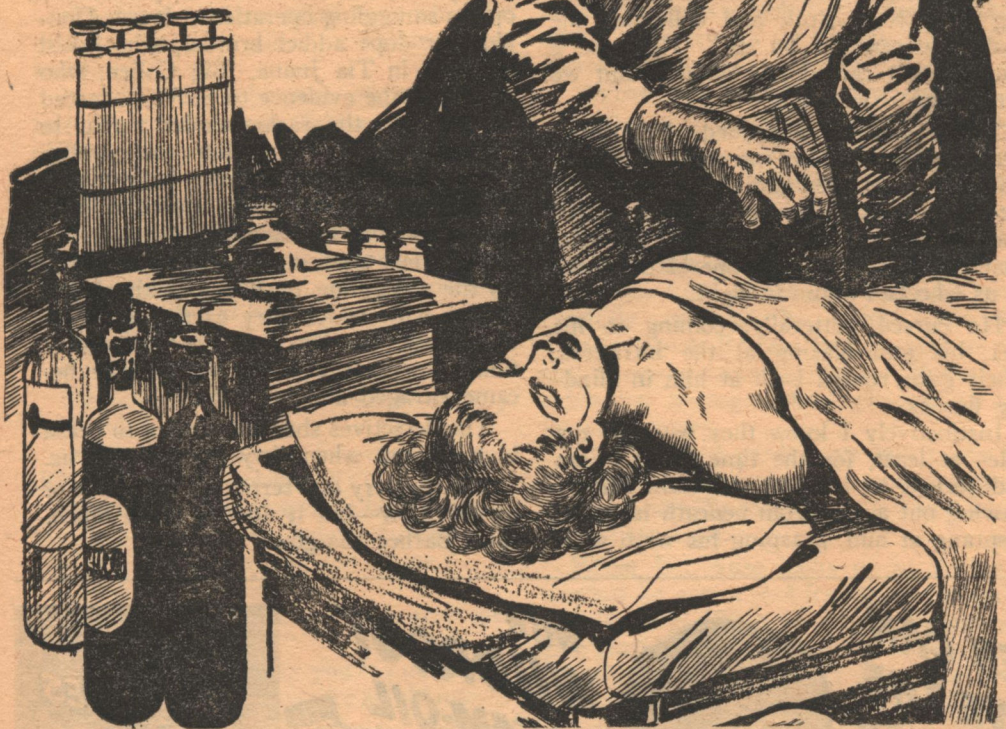
GROOMS THE HAIR
RELIEVES DRYNESS
REMOVES LOOSE DANDRUFF



EASY TO USE
NO WASTE
OR SPOILING
HANDY FOR TRAVELING

NO GRAVE HAS MY LOVE

• • •
A murderer was about to
make himself forever safe.



*Like a lethal lizard, Surgeon Spence burrowed into the heart
. . . and mind of a tawny-haired lovely—hoping to erase
the memory of his homicidal masterpiece.*

Searing Novelette
of a
Sojourn in Hell



**By JOHN D.
MacDONALD**

CHAPTER ONE

Impatient Mourner

FOUR miles from the outskirts of the bustling little industrial city of Benton, the gentle folds of the green hills so successfully enclose the quiet walls of Meadowbrook Retreat that passengers in the hurrying automobiles on Route 71 catch but a fragmentary glimpse of an ivy-clad tower.

Sometimes the small children of the neighboring farms creep close to the ab-

surdly high wrought-iron fence that surrounds the many acres to yell shrill taunts and insults. Such sport is mildly exhilarating, because there is always the danger of being pursued by one of the angry attendants.

The more intelligent residents of Benton are gratified that so renowned a private institution for the treatment of the insane is close at hand. The superstitious and the ignorant look on the place with awe and fear, and silly women who live near the area have delicious and terrifying thrills in the dark of night as they play with the idea of some 'homicidal maniac' escaping to murder them in their beds.

Meadowbrook Retreat was set up in 1893 by a wealthy textile manufacturer of Benton, whose only son became a patient there. From the air, the institution appears to be an expensive and secluded country club. There are no bars on the windows. They are trick windows, though, opening only so far, and the panes of glass are set in tempered steel. The attendants receive far better pay than at state institutions, and are consequently better trained. The high degree of technical skill available has resulted in the patient list sounding like a roll call of some of the most famous names in the country.

The bungalows for resident doctors are in the far corner of the grounds, well spaced. The most impressive one is occupied by the resident director. The one just beyond is occupied by Dr. Andre Spence and his wife.

On a cool May morning at six-twenty, Dr. Andre Spence stood in the bathroom of his bungalow, shaving. He held the straight razor in deft fingers, drawing the blue-white dryish skin taut with the fingers of the other hand, the perfect edge on the blade slicing down through the blue-black stubble.

The bones of his face were prominent. High, sharp cheekbones, a beaked, high-bridged nose, a lean, hard jaw, thin lips. He seemed not to find it necessary to blink as often as most people, and when he did so, his eyelids moved with exceptional slowness. In three days he would be forty-six. Since he managed to give an enigmatic and ageless impression, he knew that behind his back attendants called him 'the lizard'.

He finished the long, clean strokes, wiped the razor, splashed cool water on his face and dried it thoroughly. Inspecting himself closely in the mirror, he smiled at himself, then frowned. He arched one thick, black eyebrow and looked quizzical. Then he fingered the part in his black hair.

On the top shelf of the medicine cabinet was a small black bottle. He removed the top, lifted out the small brush and carefully blackened the threads of white showing in the part of his hair, careful to avoid getting any drop of the dye on his clean, dry scalp.

Satisfied with his appearance, he went into his bedroom, put on a crisp white shirt, knotted the conservative tie carefully and tiptoed softly into the second bedroom to see if the murder had yet become an accomplished fact.

The doorknob was cool in his hand. He turned it noiselessly and pushed the door open. Gray morning light filled the room. The hospital bed which he had borrowed was against the right-hand wall. His wife, a mountainous woman with a sallow brown, liver-spotted face lay on her back, her bluish mouth sagging open, her eyes sunken. She was not breathing.

Near the windows Marianne Parnal was curled in a big chair, sleeping, her white uniform rumped. A tiny smile dragged at the corners of Andre Spence's mouth. Here was the past and the future, enclosed in four walls.

WITH the air of a new proprietor inspecting his property, Andre Spence looked on the face of his beloved. She was quite tall, just an inch shorter than Spence, and the tawny lush hair, red-gold and shimmering, seemed to be trying to escape from the severe coiffure. Her head was tilted to one side. He knew that behind the closed lids, her eyes were the changing blue of the sky, seeming to deepen in shade under emotional stress.

Even under the uncompromising starch of the nurse's uniform, he could see the ripe, warm lines of her body, and his need for her was an ache that hurt his chest and made it impossible for him to draw a deep breath. He, Andre Spence, would renew himself in the warmth and purity

of her youth. She was love and laughter and a promise of unnamed delights.

A long moan from the woman on the bed startled him. He stared at her, quickly realizing that he had mistaken the apnea cycle of Cheyne-Stokes respiration for death itself.

Would the woman never die?

Mechanically he timed the next cycle, found that she did not breathe for sixty-three seconds. At that rate, death could not be long in coming. A stethoscope was on the night stand. He picked it up, listened as the unconscious woman began to breathe again.

Not long now. Not long at all.

It had started twenty-five years before. Myra had been the stocky, plain daughter of wealthy parents. An only child. It had been his chance to get the money he wanted so desperately, to travel to foreign schools, to learn the techniques of brain surgery.

He sighed. At least she had been happy for over a year. Until he had met—He frowned. Couldn't remember the name of the first one. But he could remember the scene. He could remember the look of habitual resignation and contempt that had clouded Myra's eyes.

Oh, there had been many others. None of them really important—until Marianne Parnal had come to work for him as nurse-secretary. When Marianne had come into his life he had realized that he would, at last, have to kill Myra.

He was glad that he had not been so stupid as to reveal his intense feeling for Marianne. With a girl of her character, there would have been no surer way of driving her out of his life forever. He had

cleverly and carefully searched her mind, finding and identifying all of her ideals and prejudices. And with equal cleverness, he had slowly led her to believe that Andre Spence was the finest man she had ever met.

Suddenly he became aware of the fact that Myra's breathing had not begun again after the sixty second cycle. Quickly he listened. The laboring heart had stopped.

He wondered if she had suspected during these last few days. Oh, it had been so easy. When he had decided to kill her, he had talked her into a thorough physical examination. He had wanted to find out which organ was the weakest, which place he should attack. Andre Spence well remembered his intense delight when he had detected the first symptoms of congestive heart failure.

"Why do you look so pleased, Andre?" Myra had asked plaintively.

"Because I am glad that there is nothing wrong with you, my dear," he had replied easily.

Alone in his office after the thorough examination, he had given careful thought to all factors. To cure her, she should be put immediately to bed and given shots to stimulate the fluid elimination and put on a milk diet. Bed rest would improve the circulation. If it were done at that point, she had a chance of recovering, or, at least, of living for several more years.

It would be safe to miss the diagnosis. Many doctors did. A few more weeks of walking around might put her beyond the point from which she could fight her way back to health. To make such an eventuality absolutely certain, he had given her drugs to depress the heart action, slow



Gothic "Gem"
17 Jewels,
\$39.75**

Gothic

JARPROOF

the only watch whose HEART is*
GUARANTEED A LIFETIME



*Balance staff
and its jewels



Gothic "Cadet" 17 Jewels \$39.75**

Protected by a patented mechanism, GOTHIC JARPROOF watches "can take a licking yet keep on ticking". Precision-built, exquisitely styled. Priced from \$33.75 to \$1,200. Write for free booklet "PP".

**Prices include tax

GOTHIC JARPROOF WATCH CORP., NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

the beat and thus make circulation even more faulty.

As Myra grew more ill, Marianne seemed more lovely and more desirable. And soon it became necessary for Myra to be put to bed. To protect himself, Andre Spence had asked the resident director in to look her over. He concurred in the diagnosis of congestive heart failure, and the agreed treatment was to provide rest through morphine, and aid fluid elimination with intramuscular injections of mercurhydrin.

To Andre's dismay, Myra had responded magnificently, and it became apparent that after a series of injections and two months rest she would be almost as good as new. It was then that Andre struck on how to kill her, using Marianne as the tool of murder.

CHAPTER TWO

Luscious Pawn

AND now Myra was dead. Never again would those cowl-like eyes look at him in scorn. He straightened his shoulders. A reasonable period of sorrow, and then he could ask Marianne to share his life. She would not refuse.

He heard the lovely nurse stir in the chair behind him. Quickly he tweaked the tip of his nose so sharply that his eyes filled with tears. Only when one tear spilled over the lower lid and began to run down his cheek, did he turn and say to the awakening Marianne in a voice that was broken and dull, "She . . . she's gone!"

Turning back, he stood with bowed head looking down at the silent figure. Then, his feet scuffing on the rug, he turned and walked out of the room. Near the doorway to his own room, he stopped and leaned his forehead against the door frame.

Marianne's quick steps sounded behind him. "Is there anything I can do—Andre?"

It was the first time she had ever called him anything except Dr. Spence.

He sighed heavily, turned and looked at her with sad eyes. "You're very understanding, my dear. I had been expecting it to happen when we found that the mercurhydrin wouldn't work properly, but—the reality—somehow I—"

Blindly he groped for her. For the first time, his arms were around Marianne, her body warm through the starched uniform, the scent of her hair fresh and young.

Best not to move too quickly. He let his arms drop and stepped back, his face a mask of sorrow.

There was quick concern in her eyes. "You — you look all done in, Andre. Can I make—the arrangements?"

"If you would, my dear. Tell Dr. Nase and cancel my appointments and phone the Tucker people in Benton. The only relatives she has are so distant as not to be interested in coming. Phone her attorney, Tate Kaybee in Benton. He has her will on file.

"I'm going to lie down. Please don't phone me from the office except in the case of a definite emergency."

She nodded competently. He went into his room and shut the door, slipping the bolt across it. Then, in absolute silence, he did a small and dignified dance. He then took a book from the shelf, stretched out across his bed and began to read avidly. . . .

Marianne Parnal, her duties discharged, sat at her desk just outside the door of Andre Spence's office and relived, for the dozenth time, that moment when his arms had been around her and he had been blind with his sorrow.

It made her proud and happy to think that she could help, in any small way, a man like Andre Spence. He was at the peak of his profession. His daring and brilliant work was being discussed all over the world since the publication of his last paper.

She knew how he worked, how he drove himself. She tossed her head in anger as she thought of the snide remarks she had heard about the private life of Dr. Spence. It was certainly not Andre's fault that a nurse had hung herself from a tree limb a few months before Marianne had reported. They tried to make it sound as though it were Andre's fault. Probably the silly girl had fallen in love with him and could not accept the fact that Andre had no time for her.

She flushed as she again remembered the way his strong arms had felt. Somehow demanding, even in the midst of his great grief.

Could a man like Andre ever learn to love a girl like—She tried to laugh. She was acting like a schoolgirl. Besides, she was being wicked. Only an hour before the hearse had come for Myra Spence's body.

And yet . . . And yet . . . She turned in her chair and looked out across the fresh green grass of spring. A few patients, almost ready for discharge, strolled about without supervision. She recognized one of them. Hopelessly insane for years until, under Andre's clever scalpel . . .

She wondered if she was falling in love with Andre. *I'm being a schoolgirl again*, she thought. *Goodness, he's twenty-three years older than I!*

She thought it funny that she couldn't chase the memory of his odd embrace out of her mind. When she remembered it, it was as though little warm currents chased across her.

Marianne gave a twisted smile. Andre probably didn't even know she was alive, except as a competent machine to take care of his office affairs, assist him with his patients, and perform that special job of acting as a night nurse for his wife.

She drifted into a daydream wherein she told Andre that he really should get away for a rest. He then looked at her with those odd dark eyes and said softly that he would consider it only if she were to come with him, as his wife.

But there was work to do. She stood up quickly, glared down at her desk as though it were to blame for the paths along which her thoughts had taken her. She jammed her hands down into the pockets of her uniform, and her fingertips touched two cool ampules of mercurhydrin. She took them out of her pocket, glanced briefly at them, opened the top drawer of her desk and dropped them in. As Marianne released the second one, her fingernail touched an odd imperfection in the glass throat of the ampule. She picked it up and looked at it. Even the reputable drug houses seemed to be getting careless.

With a free swinging stride, an alert vibrant youngness about her, she walked down the corridor to Dr. Nase's office.

YOUNG DR. Ralph Bettinger stood in front of the windows in Dr. Robert Nase's office, his hands deep in the pockets

of his tweed suit, his wide, usually pleasant face sullen.

Ralph Bettinger had, before the war, been a promising young surgeon. At a station hospital on Saipan, a bomb fragment had smashed his right wrist, so injuring the nerves that he had never regained complete use of the fingers on his right hand. He turned immediately to psychiatric work, and did two years internship in a mental hospital before setting up practice in Benton. He had sent several patients out to Meadowbrook Retreat, and had formed a liking for bluff, bald Bob Nase. Later, since meeting Marianne Parnal, his visits to Meadowbrook Retreat had become more frequent, and they had had a few dates.

Ralph Bettinger had walked into Nase's office and heard about the death of Spence's wife. The two men were friendly enough so that they could talk freely.

"Ralph," Bob Nase said, "you can't deny or overlook the fact that the guy is damn clever."

"I give him that, but he's a cold fish. Hell, every decent surgeon I ever knew has had to constantly battle against going soft, against suddenly looking down and seeing on the table, instead of a technical problem, a human being. Those considerations never seem to bother our mutual friend."

"Does that make him any less able?"

Ralph sighed. "No. But it means something is missing in the guy. Nobody really knows him. He poses every minute of the day."

"He's my best man," Nase said. "But I don't have to like him."

"I wouldn't say this to anybody but you, Bob, but I wouldn't put it past him to have killed off that wife of his."

"I'd think that too, but I checked her myself, and the shots were given by Miss Parnal. She's as square as they come. I guess Spence has sensed that too. At least he hasn't been showering her with his famous attentions."

Ralph turned around. "If he ever tried to—" he said in a low ominous tone of voice.

Bob laughed. "If he ever tried to, my boy, you would do nothing about it. Your Miss Parnal thinks that the sun rises and sets on Spence. In the little lottery that

some of the attendants are running on the probable resting place of the sweet Marianne's affections, you are a long shot. Spence is an odds-on favorite."

"Damn him!" Ralph whispered tightly.

Bob laughed. "Spence has a reputation for efficiency in these matters in the past."

"I think she'd see through him," Ralph said.

"I hope so. She seems a nice kid. We need more like her around here."

At that moment there was a knock at the door. When Dr. Nase called, the door opened and Marianne came in.

She smiled pleasantly at both of them in turn. "Good afternoon, Dr. Nase. Hello there, Dr. Bettinger."

"We were just discussing you," Bob Nase said.

Marianne gave Ralph a quick look. He felt himself blushing.

"Nothing bad," he said quickly. "When are you off duty?"

"You can't come in my office and date my nurses, young man," Bob said with mock severity.

"Not tonight he can't," Marianne said. "I got about three hours sleep in a chair last night."

"How did Dr. Spence take it?" Ralph asked, his eyes curious.

"He was pretty shattered," Marianne said in a subdued tone.

Ralph snorted and Marianne flashed an angry look at him. "See you later, Bob," Ralph said, and sauntered out of the office.

When Marianne got back to her desk, she found Ralph Bettinger sitting on the corner of it. She stared at him coldly.

"Why the freeze job, lady?"

"I'm sick and tired of the way you people snipe at Dr. Spence. He's a fine man and a wonderful surgeon. If some of the people who snipe could do half as good work as he does—"

She paused as she saw a funny expression flit across Ralph's face. She went up to him quickly, put her hand on his shoulder and said, "I'm sorry, Ralph. That was careless and stupid of me. I wasn't thinking of you. Honestly."

His grin was wide. "I'm not the sensitive type. Now that you're on the defensive, how about tomorrow night?"

She paused. "Okay. On one condition.

There is to be no sniping at my boss."

"No sniping at your boss," he repeated.

THE next evening at six-thirty, as Ralph Bettinger drove toward the gates of Meadowbrook Retreat, he saw Marianne, in a pale gray gabardine suit, walking down toward the gate. He pulled the little car up with a flourish, jumped out and opened the door for her. Usually their evenings out had been gay and happy.

She seemed to be in a sombre and thoughtful mood, and she appeared to be very tired.

"Where to, Princess?" he asked.

"Any place you say, Ralph,"

It looked as though it would not be a very happy evening. But he concealed his disappointment and chattered on, pretending not to notice her quiet manner, her air of being far away.

After cocktails and dinner, he asked, "Is there any special place you'd like to go, Marianne?"

"Back to the Retreat, Ralph. But park in a quiet spot on the way back. I want to talk to you."

It was dark under the trees. He lit two cigarettes, handed her one.

"Thank you, Ralph," she said in a small voice.

"What do you want to say, Marianne?" he asked gently.

"We've had fun, Ralph. You and I. I want to tell you that I don't want to go out with you again."

"Is it something I've done?" he asked, suddenly alarmed.

"No, Ralph. I think it would upset Andre if I went out with you."

He cursed under his breath and hurled the cigarette out onto the shoulder of the road. "So now it's Andre, is it?" he said, loudly and bitterly.

"Don't take it that way, Ralph. Please. I'm so humble about it. I never thought that anything like this would be possible. You see, he needs me."

"You humble! Why you're worth ninety little cold fish like Spence!"

"Please don't, Ralph. Last night, I went over to his bungalow to see if there was anything I could do for him. His voice was so tired, Ralph, and he talked so gently. He touched my hair with his fingertips

and he said that he knew he was an old man, but—

"He said that he hoped that I wouldn't think him calloused to speak of a thing like that so soon after the death of his wife, but the only way he could possibly go on with his work was if he knew that after suitable time had elapsed, I would do him the honor of becoming his wife. I was never so proud in my life, Ralph."

He turned to her, took her hand in both of his and said, "Please, Marianne. It isn't just that I love you. It isn't that at all. But he isn't right for you. Believe me!"

She snatched her hand away. "You're talking nonsense! A great man like that?"

"I see the deal now," Ralph said in a hard voice, biting off each word. "I see how it worked. It was the only way he could get you, to knock her off. Lord knows how long he's been planning it."

She opened the door of the car and stepped out. "Good night, Ralph," she said, and walked away.

He caught up with her before she had gone thirty feet. He grabbed her wrist and turned her around roughly. "Don't be a fool, Marianne. Don't throw yourself away! Why did she die so quickly? Why didn't the shots have any effect? What was in those shots?"

"Now I know the motive. This was the only way he could get you, and for years he's been ashamed of that fat elderly wife—"

Her palm cracked hard against his face and she twisted away from him, turned once more toward the Retreat.

He walked slowly back to the car, knowing that she would never listen to him, realizing how thoroughly she had fallen under the spell of Andre Spence.

His headlights picked her up. He drew up beside her and said, "Get in. I'll drive you back."

She sat beside him and did not say a word for the rest of the short trip. At the main gate, before he let her out he said, "Just do one thing for me. Keep your eyes open. Watch him."

"Good night, Ralph," she said in a monotone. "Thank you for dinner."

He watched her go up the path, then he raced the motor, jammed the little car into gear and swung around in a circle so

tight that the tires screamed on the pavement.

CHAPTER THREE

Any Poison Today?

THE day after the memorial service, Dr. Spence walked from the chapel to his office. It was rather difficult for him to keep the spring out of his step, to keep a wide smile from spreading across his face. One of his patients, nearly cured, came angling sharply across the grass so as to cut him off, but he quickened his step, pretended not to notice. Marianne had gone on ahead and he knew that he would find her at her desk.

Then there would begin the delicious game of secret understandings, of the quick warm glance of her blue eyes. Yes, he would call her into his office many more times than was necessary, just for the deep pleasure of watching the way she walked and held herself.

He gave her a sober nod, well fitting to a man who has just heard the last words said over his dead. It was difficult to keep playing the part. When she had come to his house, he had decided that it was too soon to speak to her, only to hear himself saying the very words that he had decided not to say.

It would have been in bad taste to have kissed her, to have insisted on an answer, but he knew what the answer would be, and kisses could wait. Not too long of course. But for a time. A few weeks. Maybe a few months, if he could find it possible to wait.

He sat down at his desk, realizing almost with a feeling of shock how necessary she had become to him. Every ambition of his life was as nothing compared with the deep, compelling urge to make her his own. For in her there was renewal and life, a rebirth of his youth, a time of laughter and of joy.

He frowned slightly as he realized the enormous extent of his dependence on her. It made the loss of her unthinkable. He yearned for her as the cracked soil yearns for the spring rains.

It was spring at Meadowbrook Retreat and all was well with the world of Dr. Andre Spence, neurosurgeon.

He picked up the chart that had been kept on his wife's last illness. He had carefully picked seven empty ampules out of the wastebasket in her room, one each day of her last week. Carefully he checked where, on the chart, the injection had been noted. Seven. He gave a sigh of satisfaction. An even dozen to account for. He opened the box that had been on the lower shelf of the night table.

Twelve minus seven leaves—certainly not three!

Quickly he closed the box, put it in the side pocket of his dark suit. Only three! Disposal of those three would be simple. They could be dropped in some inconspicuous place and crushed with a heel.

But where were the other two?

Nervously he drummed on the desk top with his fingernails and the office suddenly felt uncomfortably warm. It was odd. Definitely odd. And most unpleasant.

He touched his fingertips to the firm, neat knot in his necktie. No time to get the wind up. Calm and easy. Slow and easy. Marianne, probably. Of course! Maybe she had put them with the hypodermic, in the same box.

But questioning her would be a delicate matter. Rather awkward, in fact. It would have to be done in such a way that no suspicion would be awakened. But it is most difficult to make suspicious a woman who loves you, he thought. She will always think the best of you. Unless of course, it concerns another woman.

With the blunt and perfectly manicured tip of his right index finger he pressed the button to summon Marianne. She came hurrying in, her eyes bright, and he noticed with annoyance that she had left the door open.

Dr. Spence smiled ruefully, pushed the chart across the desk to her. "I guess we can destroy this, my dear."

She picked it up. Her eyebrows were raised in a manner that meant, "Anything else, darling?"

"My dear, the dispensary is getting quite stuffy about the return of unused drugs. Economy move, I imagine. That chart you have there indicates seven injections of mercurhydrin and an even twenty-four injections of morphine. We

obtained the morphine in lots of six ampules, did we not?"

"Yes, and I was about to go after more when—"

"Of course," he broke in hurriedly. He took the box out of his side pocket, opened it and said, "Well, here are the five mercurhydrin and—hmmm! Only three here."

"Oh, I have the other two," she said quickly. "Here. Let me have the box and I'll put the other two in and take it over right away."

"No need of that, my dear. Give them to me. I'm going over that way."

They paused at her desk. She took the two ampules out of the drawer and gave them to him. He dropped them on the cotton padding in the small box and slipped the box into his pocket. . . .

After Dr. Spence had left the office, Marianne suddenly remembered that she had forgotten to tell him about the call from Dr. Nase just before he had returned. She glanced quickly out the window. Yes, he was heading along the walk that led toward the main building which housed the dispensary in the basement.

She ran after him, finally managing to catch up with him just as he got inside the administration building. He turned, and she thought she detected a look of annoyance as he glanced at her. It made her heart heavy.

"Oh, Dr. Spence, I forget to tell you that Dr. Nase phoned and he wants to see you right away. I'm so sorry I forgot."

"Quite all right, my dear," he said in his coolest manner.

She wanted to redeem herself, to prove that she could be efficient. She held her hand out and said, "I can drop the mercurhydrin off at the dispensary, Dr. Spence, as long as I'm right here."

He seemed to hesitate oddly, and she noticed that he licked his lips. "Well,—ah—thank you very much, but—"

"He said it was urgent, Dr. Spence."

"Very well, then!" he snapped. He put the box in her hand, turned and walked quickly toward the stairway.

SHOCKED and hurt by his manner she stood and watched him, then she went down to the basement, puzzled.

But she found a small smile for Bud Callmer, the boy behind the counter of the dispensary.

He grinned back. "Any poison today, lady?"

"Returning these, Bud." She placed the box on the counter. He raised his eyebrows.

"Such a pleasant surprise! Thank you. Thank you."

She turned away, walked twenty feet and then came back. It was disloyalty to Andre, of course. "Bud, are the rest of them following the new instructions?"

Bud frowned. "New instructions? About what?"

"Returning drugs that haven't been used."

"Lady, you've been reading the fine print in the back of the manual."

"Let me see those again. The ones I just left. There was one damaged one." She flipped the box open, half turned, palmed one of the ampules. "Guess not," she said.

"Hey, weren't there five in here?"

"You must have miscounted, Bud." She walked quickly away, and the cool glass of the ampule had the chill of death against her palm. Her legs wouldn't seem to obey her properly, and the familiar scenes drifted by as she walked as though she were seeing them in a blurred movie. The only reality was the ampule in her hand—and the memory of the tip of Andre's tongue flicking across his thin lips, the annoyance in his eyes. And the lie.

Locked in her small room in the resident nurse's corridor, she put two ampules on her table. One was from the box she had returned. The second one had been

stolen from a ward. Around the neck of the first one was a blurred imperfection in the glass. As though a tiny drill had been used, and then the hole blocked with a blob of molten glass.

Andre Spence knew the use of drills. He used many delicate drills on the bones of the skull. Andre had a small lab and workbench in the cellar of his bungalow. It was there that he had designed new instruments for brain surgery.

For a long time she sat and looked at the two ampules. She realized that chill perspiration soaked the armpits of her uniform and that her lips felt numb.

She remembered the broad earnest face of Ralph Bettinger, the intensity of his words. "*Watch him, Marianne! Watch him!*"

She began to tremble and she went over and stretched out on the bed. She tried to keep her eyes shut, her head turned away, but each time, within a few moments she would be looking across at the desk where the fluid in the ampules gleamed golden tan in the light that came in the small window.

Maybe some sort of laboratory test. Maybe it was the same fluid, the same substance in each of the ampules.

Oh, Andre! *Why has this happened to us?*

She shuddered and hugged herself as though she were cold, but she felt the bath of perspiration on her face.

She pressed her knuckles against her forehead and wished that somehow that irritating area of suspicion could be excised, removed. The worst part of it was that she would have to face Andre. And she wondered how she could possibly keep

TWO BEST FRIENDS for ECONOMY INSHAVING

8 for 10c

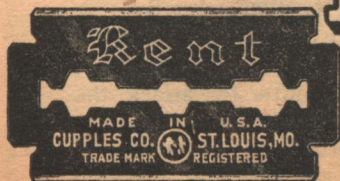
DOUBLE EDGE

Purse and Mirror Both Reveal
Kent's Smart, Sharp Shave Appeal

KENT

6 for 10c

SINGLE EDGE



If not available at your dealer, mail 10c for 1 pk.—1 for 12 pks.

CUPPLES COMPANY
St. Louis 2, Mo.



him from suspecting that she suspected him. Because his guilt had grown to be a positive thing in her mind. Guilt of murder. She realized that she was doing a strange thing. With each exhalation, she was sighing aloud. A long, droning sigh that resonated in the small room.

Like a wooden doll imperfectly articulated, her lips pale and bloodless, she walked across the grass toward the office where she would have to face Andre. Once she giggled, and it was an empty humorless sound, without reason, without basis. After that she caught her breath and it was much like a sob. . . .

The shrill emergency bell filled the halls with metallic screams. Three short, two long. First floor, G Building. The attendants within the specified range dropped their tasks of the moment, ran toward the emergency area.

Walton, a man of forty, dour and muscular, was the first to arrive. Andre Spence cleaned the tiny bits of his own tissue out from under his fingernails. The gashes along his face leaked blood which stained his white collar. Self-inflicted gashes.

Marianne Parnal cowered beyond her desk, half crouched in a corner, her arms upraised as though to shield her head from a blow. Her blue eyes were wide and dazed, and there was the growing purple of a bruise on her temple.

"Full restraint, Walton," Spence said.

Walton pulled her away from the wall, locking her arms behind her with a practised gesture. Spence felt larger than life size, able to cope with any eventuality. In a fumbling, hesitant, awkward manner, Marianne had begun to question him about the death of Myra. She realized that something had been wrong, and he knew at once that she was a deadly danger to him. A danger must be removed, quickly and without mercy. He noticed that she was highly nervous, emotional, confused, erratic. Striking her heavily, he pushed the emergency bell and dragged his nails across his cheek.

But as soon as Walton had taken her away, he looked ahead at the rest of his life and saw a flat, gray, monotonous expanse. Marianne was danger, but she was also the reason for living. She was death and she was love.

Sitting at the desk, he extended his fingers and looked at his hands. It was to have been so simple. And now the germ of suspicion in her mind made the future impossible. If that germ could be removed—His hands were as steady as though carved of white granite. Just one chance to take. Only one.

He stood by the door while Nase questioned her. Her face was bloodless, her arms laced tightly in restraint. Her eyes were wide, somehow glazed.

Nase's voice was gentle. "Did you attack Dr. Spence, Miss Parnal?"

"I . . . I—can't—remember."

"You must try to remember. Have you any reason to attack Dr. Spence?"

Her eyes were warm as she looked at Andre. "Oh, no! No, sir."

"Try to remember."

"I—can't—remember. Everything is mixed up."

Andre concealed his satisfaction. The girl was in love with him. The shock of her discovery and her suspicions had, as he hoped, disorganized her mental processes, to the extent that she was giving a very good facsimile of mental disease.

Spence said easily, "Bob, I've been watching her for some time. I've been on the verge of speaking of it, but each time she has appeared to recover. She has shown the familiar constellation of fear, anxiety and acute mental suffering over trifles. Here we see the corollary symptom of aggressive violence. This type of case has been handled in the reports by Streckler, Palmer and Grant. My diagnosis, subject to revision, of course, would be a lesion of the frontal lobes."

Her voice was a shrill scream. "No, no, no, no!"

Spence shrugged. "See? Nervous tension and distractability. It fits."

Together they left the room, Nase saying heavily. "It's a damn shame. I'll check the records, see whose permission we need."

"I can tell you that. Her only living close relative is a brother who lives in Benton. He would have the authority, I believe. . . ."

On the fourth day after the attack, the social worker obtained the necessary signatures on the appropriate document, and Marianne Parnal was officially admitted

as a patient at Meadowbrook Retreat. The brother, stunned by what had happened, was grateful that the policy of the institution permitted his sister to be treated without charge.

CHAPTER FOUR

No Retreat From Laughter

RALPH BETTINGER saw the light shining in Spence's bungalow. He hammered furiously on the door. After long moments Andre Spence opened the door. His usually pale face was flushed and his collar was open.

"I demand an explanation!" Ralph shouted.

"Dear, dear!" Spence said softly. "How very, very young of you! An explanation of what, my dear young man?"

"What are you doing to Marianne?"

"Have you talked to Dr. Nase? He's the resident director, you know. He helped examine the unfortunate young woman."

"To hell with Nase! What are you trying to do to her? She's as sane as you or I."

"I'm rather certain of myself, young man, but I couldn't vouch for your sanity, shouting like this in the middle of the night."

"Don't give me that slick talk of yours, Spence! What are you going to do?"

"She's committed here, you know. Everything is all very legal. I rather imagine that, as with all patients, she'll be treated for her illness. Probably successfully."

Ralph suddenly lost some of his anger, and it was replaced with doubt. In a quieter tone he asked, "Just what happened?"

"It's not really any of your business. But I'll tell you. She was becoming constantly more erratic. I'm afraid the death-bed watch over my wife affected her badly. At any rate, she attacked me, speaking incoherently, and I had to summon the attendants. I am as sorry as you are. She is a splendid young woman."

In a low tone, Bettinger said, "She wouldn't have—found out anything that pushed her over the edge, would she?"

Spence stretched, yawned, muffled the

yawn with the palm of his hand. "I'd like to ask you in, but it's really quite late, you know. Please rest assured, my dear fellow, that Miss Parnal will receive the best of care."

"I wouldn't want her brain tampered with, Spence."

"I'm afraid that I'm beginning to lose patience with all these theatrics, my boy. If you don't go, I'll have to call the guards."

Ralph Bettinger spun on his heel, slammed his car door shut and drove down to the gate. He considered stopping in to talk to Nase, but decided it was too late. There was something very fishy about Marianne's sudden illness. If Spence had killed his wife, and if Marianne had happened to find out, the shock might just be sufficient to . . .

He decided that as soon as his practice would permit, he would drive back out and talk to Nase—at least by noon the following day. Having made the decision, he immediately felt better. . . .

Andre Spence sat in the circle of light in the living room of his bungalow and stared through an alcoholic haze at his hands. Steady as a rock. Time to make the decision. The knowledge of his crime was buried in the gray brain tissues behind Marianne's high clear forehead. Cut the memories. Lobectomy. The operation he had perfected. Perfect for the job. The quick bite of the steady scalpel, and she would not even be able to remember Myra's death. Outside of a series of conditioned reflexes, she would be starting life anew. A new life with Andre Spence. The soft, incredible warmth of her would be unimpaired.

He stood up and lurched to the phone. But when he spoke, his voice was steady enough. Cooper and Watson were both annoyed at being awakened. But they were respectful. The ward nurse on duty accepted his instructions as a matter of course.

"Yes, sir. Have Miss Parnal in the operating theatre at seven A. M. I'll see that your instructions are carried out. . . ."

Cooper, the stolid, calm anaesthetist, checked pulse and respiration, then glanced briefly at Andre Spence.

Andre felt fear and what was akin to self-loathing as he glanced at the placid

sleeping face of Marianne. Yet mingled with the fear there was a small kernel of excitement, an appreciation of the power that was his. It was still not too late to change his mind. Cooper would be mildly surprised, and Miss Watson, the phlegmatic surgical nurse might lift one heavy eyebrow.

He was grateful for the protection of mask, cap, gown. He wondered if above the mask, his eyes glittered strangely. Small wonder if they did.

The worst danger was that raw, reckless Bettinger would get wind of it, would come storming into the small operating theatre, blinded to everything except the love he bore the sleeping Marianne.

He stood by the table, looked down at the firm, fair forehead. In her brain was the memory of his murder of his wife. Murder that used the unsuspecting Marianne as a tool. He had no doubt but that what he was about to do was unparalleled in medical history or any other kind of history. A murderer was about to open the brain case of the only witness to the crime and remove therefrom all memory of that crime, thus making him forever safe.

Of course it would have been far easier to kill Marianne too. But he could not contemplate a world in which she did not exist. Marianne had been the reason for the murder in the first place.

When he had finished the lobectomy, memory would be gone, and her personality would be slightly changed. But he, Andre Spence, would marry her and protect her all the days of his life.

His rubber-gloved hands were trembling. He stilled them with an effort. He would have to cease thinking of the patient as Marianne. She must become merely another psycho-surgical patient.

Cooper and Watson were beginning to glance at him oddly, wondering, no doubt, why he didn't begin. How fortunate that her knowledge of his murderous guilt had given her that acute combination of fear, anxiety and uncertainty which enabled him to diagnose it as an organic lesion of the frontal lobe.

Scalpel in hand, he drew a red, double-looped line across her forehead, just below the hairline. He paused for the barest fraction of a second, then his lean strong

hands began to work rapidly, precisely.

Stop! Was that a heavy, familiar step in the corridor? The steps went on. His hand trembled again.

A trickle of sweat stung his eyes and he blinked it away. Scalpel in hand, he stared down, with increasing tension, at Marianne.

She breathed softly and regularly. But she retained the memory which must be removed.

Deftness returned to him. Working quickly he stitched the opened area with great neatness and speed.

Only then did he stagger and nearly fall. Cooper caught at his arm, but he pulled away and said thickly, "I'm all right. Look after her."

After they had slowly wheeled her away, Andre Spence stared woodenly down at his hands. In there, now, was the only knowledge of his guilt.

Aloud he said softly, "I will be good to her. I will make it up to her. There is nothing in the world that I will not do for her."

And the words seemed oddly empty and shallow compared with the reality of the brain tissue he had excised.

BUT by the time Nase sent for him, he was at ease. He walked in briskly, smiling, and said, "Glad you phoned. I was coming to see you anyway, Bob. I'd like a few weeks off. It's been a long time since I've had any kind of vacation."

"Sit down, Spence. I understand you operated on the Parnal girl this morning."

"Why—yes. Why?"

"Usually you check with me."

"Just when it's convenient, Bob. During the last year I operated eleven times without checking with you."

Nase's eyes were frosty and angry. "Those statistics seem to be right at your fingertips, don't they?"

"I have a good memory."

"You wouldn't have looked up those figures before operating on Miss Parnal?"

"Why, Dr. Nase! I can't understand what you're driving at!"

Nase touched his fingertips together, stared moodily down at the backs of his hands. "Spence, there is no need in my fencing with you."

"Are we fencing?"

"You may have a month with full pay. At the end of that time, your services here will no longer be required. We are honored to have had with us for so many years a surgeon of your calibre. But sometimes the esprit de corps of this type of institute is more essential than talent or genius. We will highly recommend your ability to some other institution if you desire to continue with institutional work."

Spence pursed his lips and stood up. "Miss Parnal should be ready for discharge at the end of a month. I will come back here and get her. And as far as this childish attempt to punish me for some imaginary grievance is concerned, my dear Nase, let me inform you that I accept it with a great sense of release. I suddenly realize how stultifying it has been to work under a petty and unimaginative mind such as yours. You have done me a favor. I thank you."

Spence arranged to search her room. In his pocket was the box of four mercurhydrin ampules which he had drawn from the dispensary the day before her operation. He found the missing ampule in her desk. He could tell that it was the one, because he could see the distinct mark on the glass throat. It had been delicate work. It had taken him six hours to refill each ampule with weak tea and seal it.

Fifteen miles from Meadowbrook Retreat he stopped his car, walked down to a creek bed and smashed the ampules on a rock, brushed the glass fragments into the water.

He whistled softly as he walked back

up to the car. One month of rest and peace. Then Marianne. He remembered the scent of her hair, the look of her lips, the firm lines of her body. As he drove away, he tapped out a gay tune on the edge of the steering wheel with his fingernails. They couldn't prove a thing. No one could prove a thing. The murder had been eminently successful.

* * *

The body is a machine, and the controls are delicate.

The fair, lovely girl was in a private room. For a time the nurses tried to attract the attention of young Dr. Bettinger who spent so many hours with her. But at last they realized that he had no eyes for anyone else.

Physically she was strong. In her blue eyes was a constant look of wonder. A child seeing the world for the first time. She could be started on some routine task, such as brushing her teeth, but would not stop until told to stop. Her contact with her environment was fair, but many times she lapsed into unconsciousness.

At the end of six days she began to be able to participate in simple conversations, and began to be able to make her simple wants known. The mind began its miraculous process of switching to other areas the synthesis that had been carried on in the anterior portions of the frontal lobes.

On the tenth day, the day that it became apparent that there would be no scar on her forehead, she opened her eyes and looked up at the kind, sober face of Ralph Bettinger.

How Santa Claus found out...

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE **ALKA-SELTZER** FOR RELIEVING THE MISERIES OF A COLD

I DON'T FEEL LIKE BEING SANTA CLAUS -- THIS COLD'S MAKING ME MISERABLE!

OH, DON'T DISAPPOINT THEM! **ALKA-SELTZER** WILL REALLY BRING YOU FAST RELIEF!

MERRY CHRISTMAS! THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE **ALKA-SELTZER** FOR RELIEVING THE MISERIES OF A COLD!

Alka-Seltzer

AT ALL DRUG STORES U.S. AND CANADA

"I know you," she said, in sudden wonder.

He smiled. "You're not supposed to remember me, you know."

"Oh, but I do! I do!"

Her fingers touched the back of his neck and then her arms pulled him down to her. After they kissed, she said softly, "I've been away, my darling. But I'm here now. I'm back with you."

ANDRE SPENCE parked his car near the administration building and, when he asked if he might talk to Marianne Parnal, he was puzzled by the faint look of amusement in the eyes of the clerk.

"Certainly, Dr. Spence. You'll find her walking with Dr. Bettinger in Area C."

He hurried across the grass. The late June sun was almost unpleasantly hot.

His heart great a great leap when he saw her, walking alone, a hundred feet away.

It wasn't until he was within twenty feet of her that he saw Bettinger lounging on the grass in the shade of a tree. He decided to ignore Bettinger.

"Marianne!" he called. "Marianne!"

She turned, smiling, and then the smile faded. He walked up to her and took her slim wrist in his hard hand, conscious of the nearness of her.

But she tugged to release her hand. "Who are you?" she asked.

He laughed. "Why, you know me, my darling! I'm Andre!"

"Oh! Andre Spence. I worked for you, didn't I, before I became ill?"

"Certainly. And I've come back for you, my darling. I have a splendid offer of a job and I've picked out our home."

"I—I don't understand."

"Darling, you promised to marry me. Remember?"

"I promised to marry you? You! That can't be! Why—why, you're an old man!"

His mouth fell open. He reached for her, tried to embrace her. "Don't!" she said sharply. "Don't you touch me! You make me sick. You look like—like a lizard! You're an old man with dyed hair."

"Break it up," Bettinger called.

Andre let his hands drop to his sides. He looked at her in consternation, suddenly realizing how he had tricked him-

self. In cutting out of her mind all memory of his crime, he had also removed from her mind any regard or affection or liking for him. It was as though she had never met him before.

"But—but you promised!" he said weakly. "You must go through with it!"

Bettinger stood up and walked over. "I thought I'd let you have your fun for a few minutes, Spence. Now you can run along. There're laws about her marrying you, you know."

"Laws? What laws? You're mad!"

"Bigamy laws, old boy. She's married to me. You're talking to my wife." Bettinger put his arm around Marianne and they both looked at him. Bettinger looked at him with mild and bitter amusement. Marianne looked at him with unconcealed distaste.

Andre Spence heard a sudden distant sound, and it was as though the whole world stood still.

"What was that?" he whispered.

"What was what?" Bettinger drawled.

"Shh! That sound! That laughter! Tell me what it is! Quickly, man! Quickly!"

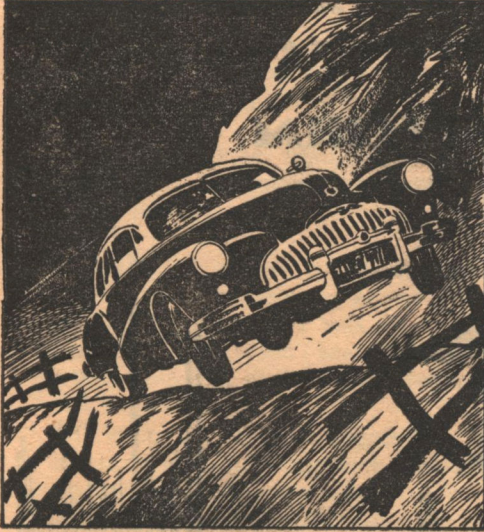
Four miles from the outskirts of the bustling little industrial city of Benton, the gentle folds of the green hills so successfully enclose the quiet walls of Meadowbrook Retreat that passengers in the hurrying automobiles on Route 71 catch but a fragmentary glimpse of an ivy-clad tower.

Two hundred yards from that tower is a building which houses the more hopeless cases. Andre Spence sits in a small room on the top floor.

When Dr. Nase looks up at Andre's window he gets a cool feeling on the back of his neck. That is unusual, because Bob Nase is relatively unimaginative. But it bothers Nase to think of a brilliant surgeon condemned to sit in that small room through the years, listening to the distant laughter of his dead wife.

There is one operation that might cure him. Yes, that one operation might return him from the world where he listens to the dead.

But the trouble is, the only surgeon who has ever successfully performed that specific operation is one . . . Andre Spence.



Slinking away from a smash-up and dead driver, a dazed guy realized that the only clue to his own identity was the loaded pistol clip in his pocket and a note to Duke, mentioning Rory's Inn.



He got a lift there, and learned that he was Duke, a professional killer. While a pert blonde amorously welcomed him, Rory propositioned Duke to kill the mayor, secret suitor of the dead driver's widow.



Recalling his past, Duke spied on the ardent widow and the mayor, overheard that they had planned her husband's death—and would shoot Duke on sight. He knew now that he and the dead driver were twin brothers.



Duke had a slap session with the widow, then met the mayor—who went for his gun. . . . The complete story will be told in Peter Paige's novel—"The Corpse And I"—in the January issue . . . published December 3rd.

MEET

*I was in back of the old eight ball . . . one step behind
Madeline—who was one step ahead of death.*

By **PHILIP KETCHUM**

I heard Madeline's
half-smothered cry.



MISS MURDER

French Madeline
Mystery-Action
Novelette



CHAPTER ONE

Here She Goes Again

MACOMBER paced back and forth across the room. He looked worried, almost desperate. He stopped in front of my desk and stood there, scowling at me. "You've got to do

something, Jerry," he insisted. "You've got to talk to her, slap some sense into her. There's no one else who can do it."

He was talking of his daughter, Madeline, trying to give me an assignment I knew I couldn't fill.

"She's in another jam," Macomber continued. "I don't know any of the circumstances. When I tried to question her she just laughed it off. Jerry, she's more than I bargained for. If I didn't love her so much I wouldn't go half crazy with fear."

I loved Madeline, too. I could really sympathize with John Macomber but I had worked out no solution to his problem. Madeline wasn't like any girl I had ever known. She had been born and reared in France. Caught there during the Nazi occupation, she had served in the underground. She could handle any kind of modern weapon better than most men. And, in spite of what her father had just said, she was a pretty level-headed kid.

"When she gets older," John Macomber was saying, "maybe she'll settle down. But I can't take it until then. Jerry how can you help me?"

I should have been flattered. Perhaps I was, just a little. John Macomber is South-West Steel. He had more money, influence and social position than I would ever have. He was calling me by my first name and there was nothing patronizing in his attitude.

He is a short, stocky, heavy-set man of about fifty, a hard-headed business man with plenty of drive. Even my secretary who runs the business affairs of the Jerry Duhan Detective Agency approves of him.

The telephone on my desk started ringing. I answered it. Madeline had a nice voice.

"Jerry, darling?" she asked. "Is my father there?"

I nodded at the phone. "Yes, Madeline."

"Will you tell him not to worry?"

"Of course," I agreed, "but I'm afraid he will. What kind of trouble are you in now?"

"This is important, Jerry. Can I count on you?"

"What is it?"

"I want you to pick me up in your car at exactly three-fifteen. I will be at the

curb in front of the President Hotel. Do not park someplace and come after me. Drive by in your car at exactly three-fifteen. Can you do that?"

"Of course," I agreed.

"It would be wise to bring your gun."

That was the tip-off. Madeline wasn't joking. I could tell by her voice, by the build up. Her father was right. She was mixing into things again. She had run into something which outraged her sense of justice.

"I'll bring it," I said into the telephone. "I probably should use it to beat some sense into you."

Madeline's laugh danced back over the wire. "Try it sometime, darling," she invited. "You are adorable when you are mad."

I hung up and scowled at Madeline's father.

"Did she tell you?" John Macomber demanded.

I shook my head. "No, but I'm going to see her. Maybe I'll find out what the trouble is."

"If you can," Macomber answered, "You can name your own fee."

"I might name Madeline," I said thoughtfully.

Macomber grunted. He turned toward the door, looked back and shrugged his shoulders and then grinned.

AT THREE-FIFTEEN, on the dot, I pulled up in front of the President Hotel. Madeline was just coming through the door, carrying an overnight bag. Madeline is really an eyeful. She's about five foot four and weighs maybe a little over a hundred. She stands very straight and there is a spring in her walk which catches the eye. She was wearing a gray suit this afternoon, and the hat perched at a rakish angle on her head probably cost more than two of my suits.

Madeline didn't hurry across the sidewalk. I opened the car door and she smiled in greeting. She lifted her bag to the back seat and climbed in beside me.

She said, "Jerry, this is perfect. We may not need the gun."

Her eyes were sparkling. She seemed calm but I could sense a hidden excitement in her manner. "Turn right on the next corner," she ordered. "Head for

the beach." She stared out the window.

I turned right, then turned right again. Madeline kept looking back. I didn't say anything. I waited

"Swing back to Geary," Madeline said a moment later. "I like Geary street."

"Are they back of us?" I asked.

Madeline nodded. "The blue car. Can we run away from it, Jerry?"

I reached for a cigarette. I drove along Geary at a moderate thirty-five. The blue Pontiac stayed half a block behind us, closing in at each traffic light. There were two men in the front seat of the Pontiac but I couldn't get a good look at them.

"Who are they?" I asked,

Madeline shook her head. "I do not know. This should have been very simple, Jerry. But it suddenly is not." She sounded puzzled.

"Tell me, Madeline," I suggested.

"You would not have heard of Henri Fontanbleau," Madeline asked.

"No."

"He was a patriot," said Madeline, "a great man. The Nazis killed him. Jerry, did you bring your gun?"

We were beyond Fortieth, close to the beach. This far from town there weren't many other cars on the street. The blue Pontiac was much nearer. It was swinging out to pass us. I said, "Brace yourself," and jammed on the brakes.

The Pontiac shot past us, cutting in to drive us into the curb, but not cutting in fast enough. The man at the wheel had a thin, hawlike face. I made a U-turn, angling for a side street.

I didn't hear the shot but the windshield in front of me suddenly radiated cracks from a bullet hole. The Pontiac was turn-

ing. A man was pointing toward us. He wasn't just pointing with his finger.

"Your gun, Jerry," Madeline insisted. "Give me your gun."

She didn't wait for my answer. She reached under my coat and pulled it from my shoulder holster.

We had a good lead but the Pontiac was racing after us.

"Turn to the right at the next corner," said Madeline quietly. "Turn to the right and slow down."

I made the turn. I slowed a little. Madeline leaned through the window. She fired twice as the Pontiac came into sight. She got one tire, at least,

We got away from there fast.

On the beach, south of the Great Highway there is a small parking area where you can face your car toward the ocean. We parked there and I turned to Madeline. "It better be a good story," I said grimly. "If I had a brain in my head I'd drive you straight to police headquarters and let you tell it to the cops."

Madeline made a face, "I don't like cops. Sometimes, Jerry, I don't even like you. I think you should trust me."

"What's in that bag you brought from the hotel?"

"The Fontanbleau diamonds."

"Where did you get them?"

"From Celeste LeNoir."

"Did you steal them?"

Madeline stiffened. "They belong to France. They shall be returned."

I reached for a cigarette. "All right, Madeline. Let's have it."

"There is not a long and romantic story," said Madeline. "I am sorry. A romantic story might appeal to you. Ce-

PAINS

*Take a tip from more than 2,000 other sufferers. Use FAST-ACTION Rub A-535! 8 out of 10 of them—in homes from Maine to California—wrote us that they liked Rub A-535 BETTER than the rubs, liniments, balms or analgesics they formerly used. Most frequently they liked A-535 better because it gave quicker relief—more thorough relief.

*Quicker, more thorough RELIEF

-and aches of RHEUMATISM
NEURALGIA • NEURITIS
LUMBAGO
CHEST COLDS



YOU needn't suffer the misery of these ACHES and PAINS when it's so easy to get blessed RELIEF. Just rub a generous amount of Rub A-535 into the place where you hurt. Then feel the warming, pain-relieving medicaments go right to work to ease your agony. You'll like the new refreshing odor, too! No worry about soiling clothes or bed linen, either, for Rub A-535 is GREASELESS, STAINLESS—rubs in quickly.

Antiphlogistine



A-535

Get Rub A-535 at your druggist today.

leste LeNoir might appeal to you. But she is a traitor to her people."

"Henri Fontanbleau was a very wealthy man," she said slowly. "He would not collaborate with Nazis. His fortune he gave to us. He died of torture rather than reveal our names. Even among us, however, there were some who were false. Such a one stole the Fontanbleau diamonds, hid them and later escaped from France. A year ago he died. How Celeste LeNoir discovered the diamonds I do not know or care. What is important is that she did find them and left France before she could be stopped."

"How did you know about it?"

"I still hear from my friends."

"The diamonds are in that bag?"

She nodded.

CHAPTER TWO

Holding the Bag

I LIFTED the bag to the front seat between us. Madeline opened it, reached inside and drew out a cheaply framed photograph about five by seven.

She stared at the picture. "There he is," she said under her breath. "The traitor! Charles Belin."

From what I could see of the late Charles Belin he was thin, tall, and rather attractive. He at least had a nice smile.

"The diamonds are in the frame," said Madeline. "Pull it apart carefully."

I pulled the frame apart. The wood was hollow—and empty.

I looked at Madeline. Her face had lost all its color. "Look through the bag," I suggested.

Madeline looked through the bag. She almost tore the thing apart.

"Jerry," she whispered. "I have failed. She had them. I know she had them. It was my responsibility to get them. There is starvation in France. My people need the diamonds, Jerry. Celeste LeNoir doesn't need them."

"Is she at the President Hotel, Madeline?"

"Yes."

"Suppose we go and talk to her."

Madeline bit her lips. Then she looked sharply at me. "We will talk to her, Jerry," she agreed. "But I will put up

with no foolish ethics on your part. We will handle this without the police or government agents. If the diamonds get tied up in your government's red tape they will buy no food for France. This affair we will handle in my way."

I left my car in a garage. The man who ran it was an old friend who would replace the splintered windshield and not talk about it.

"We will go straight to her room," said Madeline. "By now, she should be awake."

"By now?" I said frowning. "What did you do to her?"

"I tapped her gently on the head," Madeline answered.

We walked through the lobby of the President Hotel, took an elevator to the ninth floor. We turned left on leaving the elevator and walked down the corridor to 971. Madeline tried the door, opened it and stepped inside.

She caught her breath. Her body went rigid. Celeste LeNoir was stretched across the bed. Her throat was slashed from ear to ear. A deep, brownish stain had soaked into the carpet.

"Stand where you are," I said to Madeline. "Don't touch anything."

Madeline made no answer. I moved up to the bed. It was my guess that Celeste LeNoir had been dead for at least an hour. Her throat was no longer bleeding. Her face showed several scratches.

"Do not weep over her, Jerry," Madeline was saying. "She may have been lovely but she was no good."

I looked at Madeline. She bit her lips and turned away.

An open steamer trunk stood in the corner of the room. Its drawers were pulled open, the contents scattered on the floor. Madeline headed that way.

"The trunk has been searched," I said bluntly. "Madeline, what happened while you were here?"

She caught her breath. "Jerry, I did not do this. I am not sorry for her, but I did not kill her."

"You left the room unlocked?"

"Yes."

"Where was Celeste?"

"Lying on the bed—as she is now."

I took another look around the room. It was easy to figure what had happened.

The murderer had entered the room shortly after Madeline had left. He had slashed Celeste's throat, perhaps before she regained consciousness and searched for the diamonds. Maybe he had finally found them.

There was a sound at the door. I turned that way. I heard Madeline's half smothered cry. She was staring wide-eyed at the man who had just come in and whose gun covered us. He was short, slender, nicely tanned. He was the man whose photograph I had seen, the man who was supposed to be dead. Charles Belin!

BELIN seemed amused. He held his gun with the careless assurance of a man used to handling it. He let the shock of his appearance hit Madeline Macomber, then he spoke to her in French.

Madeline's answer was so low I could hardly hear it. Belin laughed. He made another comment in French. This brought a flush of color to Madeline's face.

"Pig!" Madeline shouted.

Belin shrugged his shoulders. He looked at me. "Mam'selle is temperamental," he explained. "All I did was compliment her upon her efficient use of a knife."

"She didn't kill the woman on the bed," I said.

"Didn't she? I am disappointed. Madeline was famous for her use of the knife."

"Liar!" Madeline flared.

Again Belin laughed. He had a dry, humorless laugh. It grated on my ears. "After all," he suggested, "what I think is unimportant. It is the police who must be satisfied."

"Call them," I dared.

"You Americans," said Belin, "are too impetuous. Before I call the police suppose we talk of the Fontainebleau diamonds."

"You already have them," said Madeline. Her voice was under better control. "You came here. You found them. You murdered Celeste. You waited, then, for me, hoping that I would return."

"I came here," Belin agreed. "But Celeste was dead when I entered the room. Your knife had already done its work. Where are the diamonds, Madeline?"

With them, you could possibly buy my silence."

Madeline was frowning. She was probably trying to understand his presence here. And so was I. If Belin had killed Celeste, if he had found the diamonds, it didn't seem reasonable that he would be acting as he was.

"Come, Madeline," said Belin sharply. "I want the diamonds."

"I also," said Madeline, "want the diamonds. And I shall get them."

"You are a clever one, Madeline," he was saying. "I have not forgotten that. Charles Belin, however, is clever, too. He knows some tricks about making people talk which even the Nazis didn't know. It would be interesting to try them on you."

Madeline made no answer. Her hands were tightly clenched at her sides.

Belin reached backwards. He tapped on the door. Two men who must have been waiting in the hall outside stepped into the room. I didn't know either one. Madeline also didn't seem to recognize them.

They were young, neatly dressed. One was thin, slender, pale-faced, and had sharp, dark eyes. The other man was heavier, broad-shouldered. He had baby-pink cheeks.

Both drew guns from their pockets. The broad-shouldered man stared wide-eyed at Celeste's figure. He pulled in a loud, hissing breath.

"The man is probably armed," said Belin. "Get his gun, Tony."

The broad-shouldered man apparently was Tony. He searched me, took my gun, shoved it into his pocket and then stepped behind me. I saw Belin nod his head, heard Madeline's startled cry, sensed a motion behind me. I tried to duck. Pain exploded in the back of my skull. I remember going to my knees. And that's all. A thick, heavy curtain of darkness blotted out everything. . . .

WHEN I regained consciousness I was still in Celeste LeNoir's room. The lights were on. Belin, his two pals and Madeline were gone but half a dozen men from headquarters were in the room.

T. D. Paul was standing over me. He had an empty water glass in his hand.

My face and the front of my shirt were wet. I stared up at the detective but could hardly get my eyes to focus. There was a dull, hammering pain in my head.

"More water, T. D.?" someone asked.

The detective shook his head. T. D. Paul is short, stocky, bald. He wears thick glasses over dark eyes. He seems like the mild, inoffensive, friendly man who lives just around the corner but actually he's as cold and calculating as they come.

"Well, Jerry," he asked quietly, "are you ready to talk?"

My eyes were working better. I took a look around the room. Celeste LeNoir's body was still stretched across the bed, but was covered. Otherwise the place looked the same.

"Did you get him?" I asked.

"Did I get whom?" T. D. Paul shrugged.

"The man who knocked me out."

"Did someone knock you out, Jerry?" asked the detective.

"What do you think?"

"I don't know what to think—yet." said the detective. "Maybe you killed her, Jerry. Did you?"

"Sure," I grinned. "Then I knocked myself over the head and lay down to wait for you."

The detective's eyes hardened. "Murder is not funny," he said harshly. "You are in no position to crack jokes. I want a straight story."

It has always been policy to play fair with the police, but this time I had to play it close to my vest.

"There's not much I can tell you," I said slowly. "I had a telephone call from Celeste LeNoir this afternoon. She said she was in danger. She asked me to come to see her. I did. I was slugged over the head as I entered the room."

"And that's all?" asked T. D. Paul.

"That's all."

"Madeline Macomber wouldn't be involved in this, would she?"

I wasn't much surprised. T. D. Paul is as clever as they come. He knew a little of Madeline's background. He knew of my interest in her. The murdered woman was French. It was a good guess.

"Why should she be involved?" I demanded.

"I tried to telephone her," said T. D. Paul. "Her father is worried. Madeline is not home. She had an appointment with you this afternoon."

I managed a grin. "Did she?"

The detective turned to one of the men near the door. "Bring Sid Graham in," he ordered.

The man who was brought in a moment later was young, maybe twenty-eight or thirty. There was a haggard look on his face. He stared at Celeste's covered figure and a shudder ran over his body.

"Graham," said T. D. Paul. "Did you ever see this man before?"

He shook his head. His hands opened and closed convulsively.

"Are you sure?" T. D. Paul insisted.

"I'm positive," said Graham, "but if he killed her—"

Graham bit his lips. He glanced again toward the bed. His shoulders slumped.

"Come on, Jerry," said T. D. Paul. "Suppose you and I and Graham go down to the bar and have a drink."

CHAPTER THREE

Bloody Business

WE SAT in a booth in the President hotel cocktail lounge. T. D. Paul had plain ginger ale. I had a beer. Sid Graham had a double scotch. It was a strange session.

"Graham is from Los Angeles," T. D. mentioned. "He drove up here to meet Celeste. He had car trouble on the way and didn't get in until after the *Matsonia* had docked and discharged her passengers. Someone met it. Someone came here with Celeste. Did you know that, Jerry?"

I shook my head. I was thinking of Belin. I was wondering if Belin met the boat.

"Graham and Celeste were going to be married," the detective continued. "They met in Paris. You tell the story, Graham."

"I don't want to," Graham said thickly. "All I can think of is—what happened in that room."

T. D. Paul sipped at his drink. "Graham was in service, overseas," he told me. "He wanted to marry Celeste over

there but could not get permission. Celeste had difficulties in securing a visa. She finally had to come the long way, through the Near East, the Philippines, Hawaii. I haven't checked the story but that's the way Graham gives it." He paused. "So far as he knows there was no one here besides himself who knew her. I wonder if Madeline Macomber was acquainted with Celeste LeNoir?"

"France is a big country," I suggested. "Yeah. That's what they tell me."

"Can I go now?" I asked, getting to my feet.

T. D. Paul nodded. He said, "Yeah. Try to find Madeline. I want to talk to her."

Try to find Madeline! The only hopeful point in the picture lay in the disappearance of the diamonds. So long as Belin thought Madeline knew where they were, he wouldn't kill her. But I had to move fast. I had to move faster than I ever had.

Sid Graham joined me on the curb. "I want to talk to you," he said bluntly. "I have a proposition to make."

I shrugged my shoulders. "Make it."

"I want you to find the man who killed Celeste. I want you to find him before the police do."

"Why?"

Graham's hands were working. "Find him. That's all. Find him and point him out to me. I don't have much money but name your price."

"Did you ever hear of a man named Belin?" I asked. "Charles Belin?"

Graham shook his head.

"Who else knew that Celeste was arriving on the *Matsonia*?"

"Only Pierre D'Arnot," Graham answered. "But D'Arnot wouldn't have killed her."

"Who is he?"

"An attorney. When I knew I couldn't get here in time to meet the boat I telephoned him. He wasn't in, but I left a message."

"Does Paul know about this?"

Graham bit his lips. "I had forgotten it. You don't think—"

"Where are you staying?"

"I have a room in the hotel."

"Then wait here until I call you."

"It wasn't D'Arnot," Graham muttered under his breath. "D'Arnot knew Celeste long ago. He was a friend of her family. I know this from a thousand things he told me."

"You wait here," I repeated.

T. D. Paul was watching us from the hotel doorway. There was a mocking smile on his lips. I waved to him as I turned up the street.

IT TOOK a precious half hour to shake the man Paul had detailed to follow me. After that, I stopped at my office, picked up a gun and then grabbed a taxi. I paid off the driver a block from where I wanted to go, ducked down a side street to make sure I wasn't being followed. It was an apartment house, not very large. D'Arnot was listed in 305.

I took the automatic elevator to the third floor. His room was at the far end of the corridor. Through the door I could hear the murmur of voices.

I tried the knob but the door was locked. I rang the bell, then waited. I was hoping that Pierre D'Arnot and Charles

GOING HUNTING?

Take along a BRITE-BORE gun cleaning Brush and Rod. You'll need these fine precision made tools to remove the sludge from the bore of your gun after each day's shoot. Play safe! Never let your firearm become fouled—it may cost you your life!

Your dealer carries BRITE-BORE gun cleaning equipment for all sizes and types of guns. Get yours today! Write for our FREE GUN CLEANING INSTRUCTION BOOKLET - Dept. G.

THE MILL-ROSE COMPANY

1985 East 59th Street - Cleveland 3, Ohio

MILL-ROSE

BRITE-BORE

gun cleaning

BRUSHES and RODS

keep your gun

CLEAN-SAFE-ACCURATE

Belin were the same person. I was hoping Madeline would be here. I had one hand on my gun.

"Who is it?" called a voice through the door.

"Special delivery package for Pierre D'Arnot," I answered.

It's an old gag but it usually works. There was probably a whispered conference beyond the door. I lifted my gun as the door opened and found myself staring at Tony, the big bruiser who had smashed me over the head in the President Hotel.

The shocked look on Tony's face was something to see. The other man who had been at the hotel with Belin was almost hidden by an overstuffed chair. He fired. I smashed two shots at him. Neither of them missed, but while my gun was turned that way, Tony lunged straight at me.

His fist caught me on the side of the face, driving me off balance. He lifted his gun from his pocket and was raising it. I was still holding mine and I fired first. My bullet caught Tony high in the chest. His knees folded and he pitched to the floor.

I looked quickly to where the other man had been. He wasn't in sight. I looked around for Belin. I didn't see him.

These shots would stir the curiosity of everyone in the apartment house. I got to my feet, closed and locked the door. This was a small apartment: a parlor, kitchenette, bath and bedroom. The place was a mess. The books had been dumped out of the bookcase. Pictures had been torn from the walls. An upholstered couch had been ripped apart.

I crossed to the bedroom. It was torn up, too. Back in the parlor I knelt at Tony's side. He was badly wounded but conscious. There was hatred in his eyes.

"Where is Belin?" I asked him.

Tony moistened his lips. "You'll go there if I tell you?"

I nodded.

"You'll go there," said Tony, "and Belin will take care of you. We'll go to hell together."

"Where will I find him?"

Tony could hardly find the strength to speak. "On Rowan avenue," he whispered. "The—two-story house—just be-

yond Thirtieth. He'll—get you, Duhan. Don't think he won't."

I got to my feet. I took a look at the other man, the one who had opened up on me when I came through the door. There was nothing I could do for either of them. Someone in this apartment house had probably already called the police.

I turned to the door, opened it and stepped into the hall. A man who lived opposite ducked back out of sight as I appeared.

"See that no one enters D'Arnot's apartment until the police get here," I called to him. "I'm going for help."

The man made no answer. I headed for the elevator. A woman in a pink bathrobe and a bald-headed man watched me from one of the front apartment doors, but no one tried to stop me. I was half a block away before I heard the wailing of the police-car siren.

CHAPTER FOUR

Gun-Muzzle Welcome

IF BELIN and D'Arnot were the same person why had that apartment been so torn up? Had Belin's men turned against him and started a search for the diamonds? I didn't have any of the answers. Not yet.

A taxi dropped me at Thirtieth and Rowan. Another taxi rolled past and stopped for a moment in the middle of the block. It stopped too far up for me to see who got out. I had a cigarette, the last one in my package, and wondered if I had been followed here from Van Ness.

The third house up Rowan avenue had two stories. It looked like an old house. It was set back from the street on a double lot. Lights showed around the curtained windows on the main floor, and from one window on the floor above.

I stepped up on the porch, listened at the door. I couldn't hear a sound from inside.

"Stand right where you are!" said a low voice from the end of the porch. "Get your hands up!"

I stiffened, lifted my hands. I looked toward the sound of that voice. Two men had stepped out of the deep shadows and

were marching toward me. Each carried a gun.

"Frenchie was right," said one of the men. "He was afraid he might have visitors."

I could be sure, now, that Belin was here. I was remembering something else, too. I was remembering Tony's promise that Belin would take care of me.

"Step away from the door," said the man nearest me.

The big man reached forward, pressed the bell. He kept me covered with his gun. In the half light from the street I could see a grin on his face.

The porch lights came on. The door opened. Charles Belin looked out at me. He wasn't wearing his nice smile. His eyes were rock-hard.

"So!" he murmured quietly. "It is you. How did you learn where I live?"

"Invite me in," I suggested. "Perhaps I'll tell you."

"Do not worry, Mr. Dunhan," Belin answered. "You will come in. I have a chair for you." He turned. "Bring him in, George. And take his gun."

I followed Belin down the hallway to the parlor. George and the other man who had been on the porch followed me, but I forgot them the minute I stepped into the parlor.



Madeline was here. She was in one of two chairs in front of an open fireplace where a log fire was burning. A tall, thin, dark-haired man was in the other chair, facing her. Both were tied.

Her hair was mussed, her blouse was torn, and there was a scratch on her cheek but she was alive. I knew a sudden, deep feeling of relief.



Belin placed a chair so that it formed a triangle with the other two. He looked around at me. "This chair," he announced, and a brief humorless smile showed on his lips, "is for you. George will fix you so you are entirely comfortable."

I MOVED forward but I didn't take the chair. I smiled at Madeline and it did me good to see the smile that came to her lips. Whatever had happened here before I came in, Madeline Macomber hadn't given up.

"Sit down," George said.

I shook my head. I looked at Belin. "Do you want the diamonds?" I asked bluntly.

"Yes."

"I know where they are," I lied. "Maybe we can make a deal. Have your hood quit jabbing me with his gun."

"You will sit down," said Belin, "as he has told you."

"No, I will stand up," I snapped. "If

George shoots me, all you'll get is a messy floor and no diamonds. Do we talk business?"

Belin's eyes had narrowed. "We will wait a moment, George," he said slowly. "We will see what Duhan has to offer."

"The diamonds," I repeated.

"Where?"

"We'll talk of that later."

Belin shrugged. "What do you want for them, Duhan?"

"I want Madeline Macomber," I answered. "And someone to hand over to the police as the murderer of Celeste LeNoir."

"Anyone?" Belin asked dryly.

"Anyone we can pin the crime on," I answered. "The police in this town are funny, Belin. They found me in Celeste's room. They think maybe I killed her. I want the heat off. I want a fall guy."

"How about D'Arnot?" Belin asked.

I glanced at the man in the chair opposite Madeline. D'Arnot! I looked at him more closely and suddenly recognized him as the man who had been driving the Pontiac that followed Madeline and me from the President Hotel.

"I did not kill her," said D'Arnot.

Belin shrugged his shoulders. "Who killed her is not important. It could be proven that you killed her. Anything can be proven."

"It has to be water-tight," I said bluntly.

D'Arnot pulled at his bonds. He leaned forward. "I did not kill her. I went to the hotel to see her. I started for her room. As I turned down the hall, this girl was leaving." He nodded his head toward Madeline.

"I looked into the room," he continued. "Celeste LeNoir was stretched across the bed, dead. I hurried back through the hotel. I followed the car in which this girl fled. She made her escape. If you want the actual murderer, take Madeline Macomber."

Belin seemed amused. He said, "Well, Duhan? How about it?"

I glanced at Madeline. "He is mistaken," said Madeline calmly. "Celeste was not dead when I left the room. I had tapped her on the head. I did not cut her throat, though she deserved it."

Belin was still smiling. "Take your choice, Duhan. We can pin the murder

on either one. Where are the diamonds?"

That was a question I didn't want to face. I was stalling, talking for time. I felt in my pockets for a cigarette but didn't find one. I moved toward Belin. "How about a cigarette?" I asked casually.

I had some crazy, desperate notion of getting close enough to him to jump him and swing him between me and George but I didn't have a chance.

"Watch him, George," Belin said sharply.

He stepped back. The smile was gone from his face.

I grinned. "Just a cigarette, Belin. What's eating you?"

Belin reached into his pocket. He pulled out a package of cigarettes, shook one up and held it out to me.

"Let us talk about the diamonds," said Belin harshly.

The cigarette between my lips wouldn't draw. I took it out, scowled at it. The cigarette was lumpy. I almost dropped it. I knew, suddenly, where the Fontainebleau diamonds were hidden!

"Well?" Belin asked sharply.

I propped the cigarette between my lips. It was still burning enough to give off smoke.

Belin drew a gun from his pocket. His eyes were as hard as black coals. "You lied to me, Duhan," he said grimly. "You know nothing of the diamonds. You are just in my way and people who get in my way I eliminate."

CHAPTER FIVE

Too Many Murderers

HIS gun was lifted. He was too far away to be rushed. There was the blast of a shot. I stared at Belin, wide-eyed. He had stiffened. A trickle of blood ran down the side of his face from a small hole in his temple. He dropped to the floor.

"Steady! Everyone!" said a sharp voice from the hallway.

I turned that way. Sid Graham stood at the entrance to the room, a gun in his hand.

"It looks as though I got here just in

time," Graham said quietly. "You might disarm those two men, Duhan. Maybe you ought to tie them up."

I disarmed the two men, put their guns on the table. I used the bonds which had held Madeline and D'Arnot to tie them. Madeline helped. She was a little pale.

"That was a close one, Jerry," she said under her breath. "It will give me bad dreams."

It had been close, all right.

"Where in the world did you come from?" I asked Graham.

"I followed you from the Van Ness street address. After you left the hotel I got to worrying about D'Arnot. I went out there, heard the firing, saw you leave. On a hunch, I followed you."

"A good hunch," I said slowly.

I turned back and knelt briefly at Belin's side. He was dead. I didn't need to examine him to be sure of that but when I stood up I had what I wanted. Belin's cigarettes.

D'Arnot was telling Graham how he had been kidnapped by Belin and of the men Belin left in his apartment to search for the diamonds. Madeline was listening to this, frowning.

"By the way," said Graham, turning to me. "Where are the diamonds?"

"Here," I admitted.

"In this room?"

I nodded. I fingered the cigarette package in my pocket.

"Let's see them," Graham suggested.

"They go to the police," I told him.

"Without any question, Celeste smuggled them into the country."

"Of course," Graham agreed without

hesitation. "I'd just like to see them, that's all."

"I've got to call the police," I continued. "They'll be interested in the diamonds but mainly in who murdered Celeste LeNoir. I think the murderer found the diamonds in the picture frame, took them, killed Celeste, and hurried away. My guess is that when he examined the stones more closely he discovered they were paste. He had to come back, then, and start a real search for the diamonds. He killed Celeste too soon."

Sid Graham bit his lips, then shrugged his shoulders. "Who cares? Belin, the man who killed her, is dead."

"Madeline," I suggested, "suppose you call the police for me. The telephone is there on the table."

Madeline still looked puzzled but she didn't argue with me. She crossed to the table. She sat down, reached for the telephone, dialed the operator.

"What about the diamonds?" Graham asked.

I grinned. "We'll wait for the police. I want them here when the stones are found."

"But where are they?" Graham insisted.

I kept the grin on my face. "Graham," I said bluntly, "until the police get here, no one touches the diamonds. You will get to see them when I put them in T.D. Paul's hands."

Graham blinked. He moistened his lips. That harsh look he had worn in the hallway when he had shot Belin came back into his face. He jerked his gun from his pocket, covering me and D'Arnot. He backed away a step or two.



A CLUE FOR YOU

IF it's mystery and adventure you want in your radio listening fare, just tune to these programs.

QUICK AS A FLASH

Sundays, 5:30 p.m., EST.

Mystery quiz with Win Elliot

NICK CARTER

Sundays, 6:30 p.m., EST.

Lon Clark as radio's Nick Carter

SHERLOCK HOLMES

Sundays, 7:00 p.m., EST.

Conan Doyle's famous mysteries

THE FALCON

Mondays, 8:00 p.m., EST.

Romance mixed with murder

GREGORY HOOD

Mondays, 8:30 p.m., EST.

Tales from his casebook of crime

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER

Tuesdays, 8:00 p.m., EST.

Eerie and supernatural tales

UNDER ARREST

Tuesdays, 9:30 p.m., EST.

Police Captain Scott's adventures

HIGH ADVENTURE

Wednesdays, 8:30 p.m., EST.

High adventure of all kinds

MUTUAL BROADCASTING SYSTEM, INC.

"The diamonds, Duhan?" he grated.

"Weren't you satisfied with the substitutes?" I asked dryly.

"Duhan," Graham barked, "I want those diamonds. There's no one going to walk in here to save you this time."

He meant it. I could read that in his face. "*At once, Duhan!*"

I GLANCED toward Madeline. I had sent her to that table not only to call the police but because the guns I had taken were laying there. Madeline had already picked one up. She seemed perfectly calm as she squeezed the trigger.

Sid Graham gave a high, shrill cry as a bullet smashed his arm. He dropped the gun he was holding. He had probably forgotten all about her. Forgetting about Madeline is always a mistake. . . .

T. D. Paul paced back and forth across the room. He had heard my story. He didn't seem at all pleased.

"The diamonds," he said abruptly. "Where are they?"

"You found them when you searched Graham," I answered.

"Those were paste," the detective growled.

"Sure they were," I agreed. "Maybe the real diamonds never left France? Maybe Graham, Belin and D'Arnot were after something which Celeste didn't have."

T. D. Paul scowled at me. He scowled at Madeline. "Graham reported Celeste's death so that he, as her fiancé, could claim her belongings for another search."

I nodded.

"Belin," the detective continued, "was probably in touch with Celeste. He got to her too late. He learned of D'Arnot's interest in the girl. He kidnapped him and Madeline, figuring one of them had the diamonds."

I nodded again.

"Graham," said Paul, "killed Belin to save you because you boasted of knowing where the real diamonds were hidden."

"I can tell you this," said Madeline. "If there were any real diamonds and Jerry and I could get them they would go back to France to help my people buy food."

T. D. Paul grunted. He rubbed his

jaw. "Clear out of here, both of you," he said suddenly. "And quit getting in my hair. Get married. Go away someplace and forget to come back."

I grinned, winked at him. I took Madeline's hand and we walked to the door.

"Send my best wishes to France, along with the diamonds," T. D. Paul called. "If there are any diamonds."

We caught a cab and settled back in it. I had my arm around Madeline's shoulder. I was glad this was over.

"Jerry," said Madeline suddenly, "give me a cigarette."

"You don't smoke," I answered scowling.

"And never before, since I have known you," said Madeline, "have you gone so long without me. I saw you take the cigarettes from Belin's pocket when you bent over him. I saw him pick up the package in Celeste's room. I want to see the diamonds, Jerry."

"When we get you home," I promised. "You can never be sure of T. D. Paul. We might be stopped on the way."

We weren't. When we reached the Macomber home we broke open the cigarettes. We found twenty-six stones, some almost too large for the cigarettes in which they were hidden.

"How will you get them to France?" I asked bluntly.

"In a cake," Madeline replied. "A birthday cake. I know where to send it. The Fontanbleau diamonds are going home."

She was smiling. She looked very well pleased with herself. She got up and came over to where I was sitting. She curled up in my lap.

She said, "Jerry, if I ever get married I want to marry you. But you will have to quit detective work. It's too dangerous, much too dangerous."

"Who got me into this mess?" I growled.

Madeline wrapped her arms around my neck. "Let us not talk about that now," she whispered. "Let us just sit here."

Madeline's father had gone to bed. The house was quiet. It was nice sitting there with Madeline on my lap. I offered no objections.

HOW DEAD CAN YOU GET?

Her horror-lit eyes
watched Moon like a
hypnotized bird's.



By **ROBERT
TURNER**

*She gayly let her two-time candle burn
at both ends—forgetting that mon-
strous Moon was man enough to snuff
it out.*

HIS name was Moon, Franklin Moon, although nobody ever used his first name. Few even knew it. He was an ex-wrestler, a mountain of a man, with a huge, half-bald head and scalloped ears. He had sloping bull shoulders and hands like hams and a lot of chest. His feet were clown-size.

"Moon, the Goon," they called him when he wasn't around. Moon's brain was not so large. He'd been dumped on his head too much in the ring.

He came to work as a bouncer in the Golden Palms after a few fights there one week. I was tending bar. It wasn't much shakes—just an overgrown tavern with delusions of grandeur. It had a big, circular bar, with a small elevated stage in the center for entertainment, Friday, Saturday nights. Week nights, they had a girl piano player, name of Margo.

There was a South Sea motif to the decorations, gilded palm trees at each end of the bar, that sort of thing. The place pulled crowds, though. I'll give it that.

After Moon came, there were seldom any fights in the Golden Palms. He had a way about him. He was big and friendly and good-natured and the customers liked him. But if people started swinging, Moon would grab them by the scruffs of the neck.

He'd crack a wide, ugly grin and say: "Why don't you boys act nice? You boys ain't acting refined. Settle the argument peaceably and Rick buys you drinks on the house."

It would only take a little of that. The guys would feel pretty futile and silly against Moon's strength and do like he said. That was Moon.

This Margo, she played piano there, week nights. Wicked piano. Mean and lowdown, sometimes. Bright and tinkling as sleigh bells sometimes. And then again, music soft and magic as lake moonlight in June. Margo could drive you crazy with that piano.

She was thin and dark and pretty in her intense sort of way, with her long black hair and pale cheeks and too-bright black eyes. Her mouth was full and spoiled looking and always painted too red. She had a slight, almost childish figure.

A lot of guys went for Margo. She looked at you with those snapping black eyes while her fingers worked some blues from that piano and it was hard not to go for Margo. Even I went for Margo. And I'd known enough women to be smarter than that.

Right from the start, Moon paid a lot of attention to her. He'd keep looking at her and smiling. If he'd had a tail, he'd

have knocked himself out with wagging it.

When he wasn't around, Margo'd say to me: "The big slob!" She'd laugh. "Lord, what a cluck! And he thinks he can make me like him or something. Rick, how dumb can you get?" That was her favorite expression.

But one day she changed. Moon brought her a little box, all wrapped fancy. Inside was a tiny, gold baguette wrist watch. It was a good one. It cost maybe a couple hundred. Moon would be in hock for months. It was right for Margo, too, fragile and lovely. You'd wonder how a guy, not so bright, like Moon, would have such taste.

Margo went into raptures. Margo was a girl who liked lovely things. For a long time she stared down into the box. Then she took out the little card. In a childish scrawl, it said: "From your friend and admirer, Moon."

She lifted the watch out and snapped it onto her wrist. When she looked at Moon, her dark, thin face was alight.

She said: "Moon, you crazy galoot. It's the prettiest thing I ever saw. I never had anybody give me anything so pretty."

Moon stood there, his face red and sweating. When Margo darted over to him and threw her arms around him and peck-kissed him on one cheek, Moon's eyes rolled and he like to have fainted right there.

Later, I got Margo alone and told her she'd better give the watch back. She'd better not kid Moon along like that. These big dumb guys were bad medicine for a woman to monkey with, I told her.

She got nasty. "You out of your mind?" she said. "What harm is there? He's like a kid taking a shiny apple to the teacher. He's just got a crush on me. I can't help that. Give it back, hell!"

"Okay," I said. "I guess you know what you're doing. You're over twenty-one."

"Did you ever give me anything, Rick?" she asked. "A year, now, I'm true-blue-Sally. Nobody else. And what do I get from you? A lot of talk but no action." Her eyes softened a little. "I know you; you'll get around to it, Rick. But meanwhile, what harm if the big gook wants to give me a little present?"

I didn't say anything else. I just walked

away. A couple weeks later, Moon brought her another gawgaw. This time, he asked her: "How about being my girl, Margo? I bring you lots of pretty things all a time, you be my girl?"

Margo, she laughed. She winked at me, the side he couldn't see. She said, "Sure, Moon. Why not? A girl's lucky to get a nice feller like you."

"You mean you'll give me a date?" He twisted his big hands all up into one corner of his jacket.

"Now, Moon," Margo laughed. "How can we have dates? Your night off, I work. When I'm off, you have to work."

His face fell.

"But look," Margo said quickly. "We have a date every night. We have one long, continuous date. We're here together every night."

He thought about that, his corrugated brow working. Then his scrambled features brightened. He said: "Yeah. That's so. I—I hadn't thought about it like that." He suddenly reached out and took hold of her wrist. He said: "Then you're my girl. That means when you're off, you don't go out with nobody else. Is that right?"

Margo winced. "Don't be silly, Moon. I said I was your girl, didn't I? Moon! Let go my wrist, Moon. You're hurting me."

He freed her wrist and looked contrite. "I'm sorry, Margo. I just wanted things should be understood."

MOOON seemed to go around in a trance from then on. He'd always been a good-natured, laughing, happy-go-lucky guy. But not any more. He was love-sick. He couldn't keep his eyes off Margo. He walked into things. He didn't hear when people spoke to him. When Margo played that piano, he looked solemn and awed, like a guy in church. If it hadn't been pathetic, it would have been funny.

A couple times, I tried to get Margo to stop. I was afraid of what was going on. You never can tell what will happen, a big clunk like Moon goes head over teacup for a girl, if he ever finds out he's getting the business.

It went on. She'd pull stuff like this: she'd wait until the bar was jammed and there was a lull in the gab and then she'd

say in that clear, carrying voice of hers.

"Moon, what's the idea, flirting with that blond girl who just went out?"

Moon would look at her, stupefied. "What blonde, baby?" he'd say.

"You know," she'd pretend to pout. "I saw you, giving her the eye. Don't kid me. You're getting tired of Margo. You want to call it quits and chase other girls, just say so."

Moon's big hands would tremble. His jaw would slacken. "I wasn't givin' no other babe any time, honey," he'd whine. "You know that. I don't even see no other wimmin when you're around, baby."

Margo would keep ragging him, hardly able to keep a straight face and everybody at the bar would be killing himself, stifling the laughs. Moon never seemed to tumble, even when it became a regular routine, after awhile.

When she'd had enough, Margo would smile sweetly and say: "I was only teasing, Moon. I wanted to see how you'd act. It was a sort of test. Y'know?"

Moon would blink rapidly. His lined brow would work and he'd finally get it. "That Margo," he'd say. "What a kidder."

Sometimes Margo would be in a mood to show her power over Moon. Maybe she thought she was playing Beauty and the Beast or something. I don't know.

He always went behind the bar and made her drinks, himself. When he'd rush it over to the piano, she'd find something wrong with it. The glass would be too full, or not full enough. The drink would be too dry, or too sweet.

Sometimes, he'd make four or five and then she'd tell him: "The hell with it, Moon. You never did know how to make a martini. Let Rick make it. How dumb can you get, you can't even make a martini, Moon?"

Some of the customers thought that was funny, too. Some didn't. Some got funny looks on their faces when Margo pulled that routine. It made me a little sick to the stomach. It made me sweat to watch her do that to Moon.

I tried to talk to Margo and make her quit. She only laughed at me. Where was my sense of humor, she wanted to know.

"Humor?" I repeated.

"Aw, Ricky," she whispered and looked up at me with those black eyes. "What do you care? As long as I'm true to my Ricky, what do you care? Maybe it's because I'm bored with this life. When you going to get me out of all this, Rick? When you going to do something about us?"

"I don't know, Margo," I said. "I don't know." I walked away from her. I really didn't seem to know any more.

Once, I tried to wise up Moon. It didn't work. He kept blinking and frowning his brow and saying: "What do you mean, Rick? What you gettin' at?"

I didn't want to hurt him. I tried to slip it to him gentle and when it didn't take, I bore down some. He stopped me in mid-sentence. He gathered up half the front of my shirt and jacket in his fist and I went up on my toes.

"Rick," he said, "you trying to tell me Margo don't really like me? You saying maybe she ain't true to me or something?"

He didn't even understand, couldn't the way it really was. But he was trying hard. For a moment, there was a flicker of suspicion in his eyes but then it died right out again. So I gave it up. I figured maybe it would all work out some way.

I said: "Skip it. I was taking through my hat. I guess I had a few too many, tonight."

His fist let go my shirt front and my heels came back down onto the floor. "Yeah," he said dully. "I guess that's it, Rick. But you want to watch how you talk about Margo."

A week went by. Then one night, Margo was off and I came in late to work. I noticed right away that Moon wasn't around. It seemed strange not having him there. And there was a sort of subdued hush to the place, as though everybody was waiting for an ear-splitting crash. You could feel it.

I started to put on my apron. I looked up and down the row of tense faces at the bar and grinned.

I said: "What the hell is this? A wake? What happened?"

NOBODY answered me. Nobody said anything. Then an old drunk near the end of the bar propped up his head and

his heavy hooded eyes and stared at me ominously. He waggled his loose-necked head in a motion of regret.

"Hell t'pay," he said thickly. "Lots trouble. I wouldn't want to be that poor guy."

I moved down to his end of the bar. "What guy?" I demanded. "What are you talking about?"

The drunk blinked owlshly. "Y'missed it," he said. "Moon. He's gone now. He's gone out t'kill the guy."

I felt my stomach go hollow. "Look," I said. "Will you for heaven's sake tell me what happened? Where is Moon?"

The drunk tried to get a manhattan to his lips, spilled most of it and gave it up.

He stared at me solemnly from under lowered lids. "Y'know Al Loomis, that flashy looking bookmaker comes in here sometimes?" He shrugged, fatalistically. "Well, Moon found out this Al Loomis been makin' time with Margo. Found out he had a date with Margo, t'night."

I didn't say anything. The terrible possibilities involved were much too much for me.

The drunk went on. "Soon as Moon heard about this from some loud mouth at the bar, he vaulted right over the thing and tore out of here like a thousand hornets were buggin' him. He'll kill the poor—"

I had my apron half off. I dropped it to the floor. I didn't bother to put on my jacket again. I went out of there in my shirt sleeves.

Al Loomis lived in a big garden apartment about four blocks from the Golden Palms. It was the nearest place to try. It was the right one, too. When I got to his third floor flat, I found the door hanging from one hinge. It was split down the middle.

Inside, Al Loomis' apartment looked like a large sized twister had ripped through it. A foyer mirror was smashed in a million pieces on the floor. I stepped through the debris, my guts shriveling to the sound of screams coming from inside the apartment. I stepped into the living room.

Moon had gone berserk. He was still that way. He had smashed all the furniture, piece by piece. He was standing knee-deep in the rubble. He had hold of

Al Loomis around the throat, his large hands closing all the way around Loomis' thin neck as though it was the scrawny gullet of a chicken. He was banging his head against the wall.

Al was a small, dark, good-looking, nattily dressed little man. Only now he wasn't so natty. His shirt was half ripped off. As I broke into the room, Margo, her hair stringing down her back, was tugging at one of Moon's arms with both hands, trying to pull him away from Al Loomis.

Moon dropped one hand from Al Loomis' throat. He gave Margo a back-hand swat that sent her spinning against the far wall, tripping over a broken chair. She sat down there, dazed.

Her mouth opened and tried to scream but she couldn't find voice. Her face was bruised. Her horror-lit eyes watched Moon like a hypnotized bird's.

I said, sharp: "Moon! Quit it, Moon!"

He turned his head toward me and his eyes were bulging and wild. He didn't even seem to see me. He turned back to Al Loomis and his great fingers tightened and I could tell by the slack-featured expression on Loomis' battered face that he couldn't take much more of this.

I climbed across the pile up of broken furniture and I yelled once again for Moon to stop but he didn't pay any attention. Instinctively, I bent and picked up the base of a china lamp that had not been smashed. I took two steps and brought it down hard against the back of Moon's skull.

His hands fell away from Al Loomis' throat. He took a backward step, half turned toward me and I was afraid. His hands started to reach toward me. I felt my liver shrivel. He was coming after me now for interfering.

But then his hands dropped to his sides, limply, as I said, sharp:

"Moon, cut it! You don't want to kill the guy! Margo isn't worth that. Stop it, Moon!"

He shook his head groggily and put one hand to the back of his scalp. A slight, sheepish grin flirted about the corners of his wide mouth.

He mumbled: "Yeah, Rick. Okay. I-I guess they had enough." Then he turned slowly toward Margo. He said: "You

better not come to the Golden Palms no more. You better not work there no more. If I ever see you again. . . ." He made a motion as though breaking something with his gorilla hands.

She closed her mouth and wet her lips with her tongue. She tried to say something but couldn't. She looked at him and at me, then at Al, sick and beaten and slumped against the wall, then back to Moon. She nodded her head up and down.

Just to make sure, I said: "There won't be any charges, either, Margo. I don't think there'd better be any trouble."

The look of fear on Margo's face told me I didn't have to worry about her.

I said: "A gal who would promote a guy like Moon." I took something round and shiny from my pocket. I'd bought it just before Moon came to work at the Golden Palms and I'd been carrying it around ever since.

"Baby," I said, "how dumb can you get?" I threw the engagement ring on the rug at her feet and then Moon and I got the hell out of there.

**The only 3-WAY relief
from your
BACKACHE**



Back plasters are the one product made for 3-way relief of painful, muscular backache:

(1) The medication in Johnson's **BACK PLASTER** stirs up circulation, brings the healing and warming blood to the sore spot. Tense muscles relax and the pain eases. (2) It straps twitching muscles—cuts down those jabs of pain. (3) The protective pad guards against chilling.

Tests by doctors show that Johnson's **BACK PLASTER** helps nearly 9 out of 10 sufferers. It's made by Johnson & Johnson—known for fine surgical products for 61 years. At all drug stores.



**Suspenseful
Detective
Novelette**

**By B. J.
BENSON**



*Tough Dick Dobson couldn't
shoot or slug his way out of
Boss Sheldon's brunette-baited
trap.*

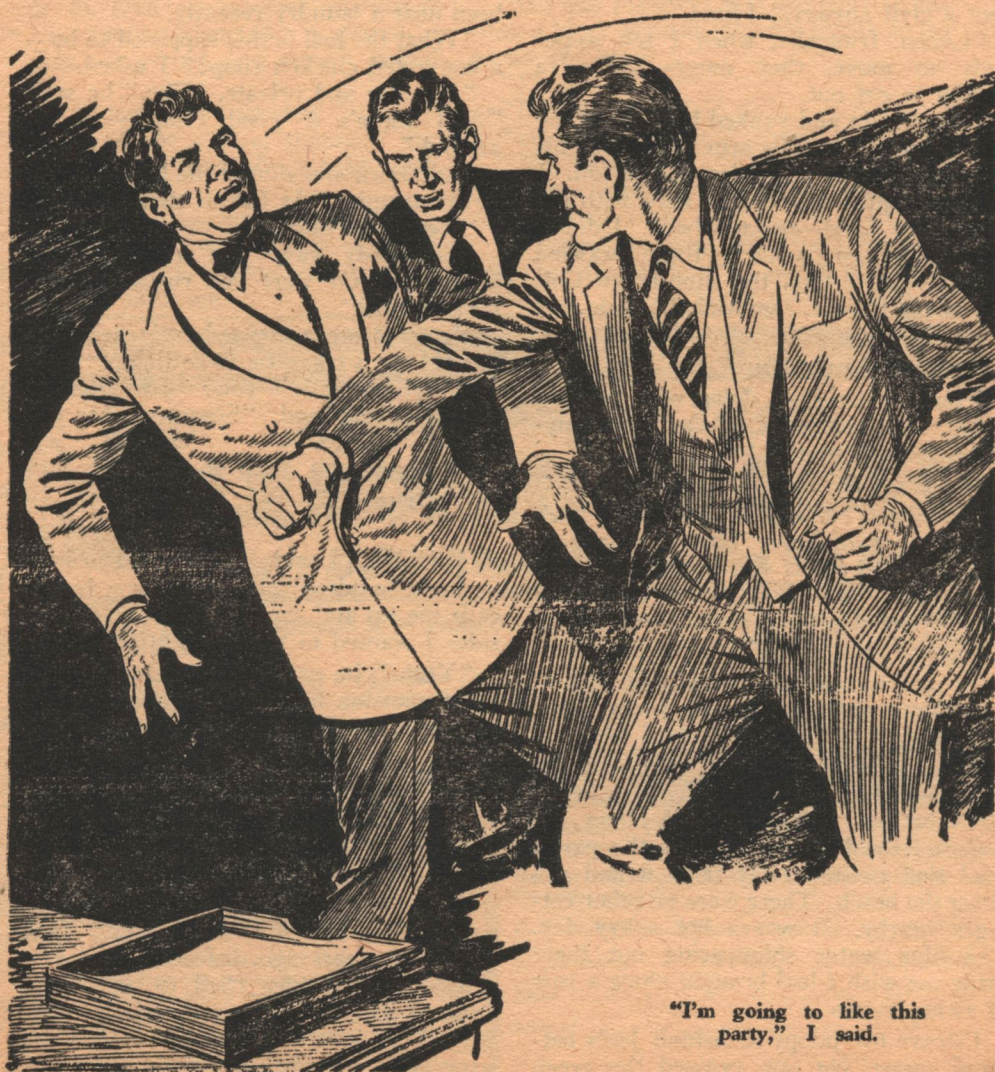
HOMICIDE IN A HURRY

CHAPTER ONE

Buddies' Bond

I WAS making the turn on the beach road, just as Joe had told me over the phone, when I saw the gray convertible parked off the road a little around the

bend. The first thing that I noticed were the out-of-state markers. I moved on past and looked back through the rear-view mirror and saw the guy behind the wheel give my car the eye and take down my registration. I stopped and backed up along side of him.



"I'm going to like this party," I said.

He was a dark, heavy-set young punk, with beetle brows, cauliflower ears, and he had a scar that ran along his left cheek and under his chin. He was wearing a gray tropical worsted that was as wrinkled as a prune and beneath his big shoulders I noticed a tell-tale bulge near his armpit. I didn't know how tall he was. He was sitting down.

"Anything wrong, mister?" I said.

He looked at me with a sneer on his face, stopped chewing on his gum and then spat at my car.

I got out of my car.

He said: "Get the hell out of here."

"When I talk nice to people, sir, I expect a civil answer," I said.

"Listen, fruitcake, when I tell somebody to move, they move—fast. He started to get out.

I reached in and yanked him out of the car by the collar. His arm snaked for his left shoulder like a rattler on the kill. I hit him a quick one on the neck with the side of my hand—not too hard. I didn't want to kill him. As he lay there sprawled on the road, I took the snub-nosed Colt out of his holster, removed the slide and put it in my pocket.

He started to get up.

I pushed him back down with the heel of my shoe and said: "Was there anything else you wanted to say, mister?"

He didn't have anything else to say.

"All right," I said. "Get in that hack and get out of here. Here's your gun, what's left of it. If you want a new top piece you'll have to go clear to Center City. They don't sell parts around here. It's a nice quiet town."

He got up, dusted himself off, got in the gray convertible, swung around and headed back to Grandview. . . .

The summer cottage was freshly painted yellow and was as small as a sales-girl's bathing suit. It stood along the water of the bay and well off the paved road that twisted away from it and ran along the beach. There were no other cottages nearby. It was a hot sultry day. The blue water shimmering out there made me wish I had brought along a pair of swim trunks.

I drove my jalopy in behind Joe's battered coupe, got out, crossed the green lawn and walked onto the screened porch.

I had to stoop a little so that I could get all of my six feet two in. The boards squawked at my two hundred pounds.

Joe was sitting in the chair facing the door with an army carbine in his hands.

"Put the hardware away, Joe," I said. "It's only me. Mike Dobson, remember?"

Joe needed a shave badly and he had lost some weight. From what I could see he hadn't been getting any sleep lately, either.

He got up and put the carbine away in a corner and came over and shook my hand. He was wearing an old pair of army pants and a sweat shirt that hadn't been near a laundry recently.

"What the hell is this supposed to be—a converted chicken coop?" I asked.

"It's nice and private, Mike," he said. "And there's a good clear view all around."

I sat down and shifted the holstered .38 in my armpit. "As bad as that, huh?"

"Yeah," he said.

"Somebody gave you a going over lately, too. Or were you run over by a lawnmower?"

He gave me a twisted little grin and handed me a cigarette. We lit up.

"Anybody follow you?" Joe asked.

I shook my head. "Somebody has you spotted, though."

"I know that. But first off, I can't pay you much."

"**L**OOK," I said, "I drove down here a hundred miles because a buddy calls me up and says he needs help. Besides I wanted to take a vacation."

"Yeah," he said. "It ought to be a great vacation for you. Bugs Sheldon is here in Grandview."

"So I figured by the looks of some of the new citizens around here."

"He's got some boys with him. You can tell that by a look at my kisser. They caught up with me yesterday."

"I haven't seen Bugs Sheldon since I was working for the D.A.," I said. "That was seven years ago, before I went into private work. Bugs tried to move into Center City. I helped move him right out. It ought to be a grand reunion. He's got some fancy porcelain in his mouth that I contributed to."

"He's here now," Joe said. "It's the same old Cleaners and Dyers Association. He come here a month ago and started to take over the trucking. His trucks call for and deliver to the plants. If you join up with his outfit—then nobody will get hurt."

"Sure," I said. "Then he keeps upping his price and the association dues and he's in clover. That is, if nobody happens to buck him."

"I'm bucking him, Mike."

"So I see."

"He told me to get out of town by tomorrow," Joe said. "I might as well, anyway. He's smashed my truck and he's got all the tailors scared in the towns around here. They'd crawl in the cellar and hide if they saw me drive up with a truck to call for their stuff—if I had a truck, which I haven't anymore."

"So you called me up."

He nodded. "Have a piece of fruit, Mike."

I reached over to the bowl of fruit that was on the table and picked out a nice soft pear and bit into it. "Still never get enough fruit, Joe," I said. "I'll never forget lying out there in the rain near Cassino. We'd all worry about the 88's, and you'd be talking about getting your hands on some fresh fruit."

"I like fruit," he said as he grabbed himself an apple.

I said: "Sheldon wouldn't come all the way out here to operate in a small town unless he had some high-up handling the setup. Somebody sent him—or sent for him. What's the layout?"

"Well, Grandview here is the county seat. About fifteen thousand population. There's a lot of small towns around that feed off Grandview and all told the population should run close to thirty thousand. In summer more because of the resorts. That would make it run financially very heavy."

"No, Joe, that's not it. That's peanuts to a guy like Sheldon. Who owns the cleaning plants?"

Joe said: "There's two. One in South Grandview owned by old man Dodds, and the other right in Grandview owned by a fellow named Gil Martin."

"How are they taking it?"

"Old man Dodds says it ain't none of

his business who trucks the cleaning in," Joe said dismally. "He believes in free enterprise."

"And this Martin?"



Joe looked at me queerly, hesitatingly, before replying.

"I saw Martin a couple of days ago. He is yelling that he wants to call copper."

"Did you?" I asked, knowing that of course there was just one reply.

"No," said Joe. "We can't pin anything on Sheldon. Everything is legal and formal."

"What about your truck and the face lifting you got?"

"I can't pin a thing on them for that," Joe said. "I ran out of gas sudden-like on the beach road and when I got back from the gas station the truck had gone off the cliff onto the rocks below. Nobody saw a thing. Yesterday they caught me in an alley near the Central Hotel and they worked me over. I didn't even see them."

"The cops are clean here, Mike, but it's a small town and they've never been up against a lowdown deal like this one of Sheldon's."

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"I don't know, Mike. That's why I sent for you. I'm broke now and the truck is gone. But I ain't going to be quitting, Mike."

"Good deal," I said. "And what about Audrey?"

"I told her to pack out of here. She knows there's trouble, so she left this

morning for her mother's at Shore Acres."

"Did she say to quit?"

"No."

"That's a wife for you," I said.

"It's up to you now, Mike."

"O.K.," I said. "I'm going back to town. I want you to go down and see Dodds and Martin. See if they'll refuse to take any work from the association for just a week. Talk to them. It's only a long shot but they may go along with a guy that's lived here all his life. I'll meet you back here at six tonight."

I got into my car and drove back to town.

CHAPTER TWO

Herman Will Sing. . . .

I PASSED the county courthouse with the well-kept green in front of it, eased out of the summer traffic and pulled up in front of an old granite building that must have been erected by the first settlers in Grandview. There was a dilapidated sign that said, *Police*, rather apologetically. I went in.

The sergeant told me that the chief was in his office in back.

Chief Robinson sat behind an old oak roll top desk that was probably picked up in a rummage sale. He looked up at me with friendly eyes.

"Got any time to talk?" I said.

"All the time in the world, young feller," he said, lighting up a cigar. Then he shifted his heavy bulk a little, scratched his bald head and motioned me to a chair.

"I'm Michael Dobson," I said, "from Center City. I'm a private detective."

His pale blue eyes chilled a little as he swung toward me and the gold badge on his white shirt glinted in the sun that was coming through the dirty window.

"I heard of you, shamus," he said. "You used to work for Crosson when he was D.A. up there. Yup, you got quite a reputation for being tough."

"I'm also a friend of Joe Grimes. That's why I'm here."

He stuck out his hand and I took it. His eyes had warmed up again.

"That Cleaners and Dyers Association that moved in here stinks," I said.

"This is always been a clean town," said the chief, puffing on his cigar. "We got nice people living here. They pay taxes to keep the place orderly. So far it's been that way."

"And now?"

"Sheldon is here," he said. "You know that. That's why you're here. Nobody's paying me to look the other way, shamus, if that's what you're thinking."

He stared at the chief.

"Can you get anything on him?"

"He's as clean as a hound's tooth," the chief said. "There ain't a tailor in town that'll swear out a complaint. When we got the report on Joe's truck we couldn't find a thing. I can't even hold Sheldon on a vag charge. He's got an office and all the doo-dads. If I did pick him up for questioning he'd be sprung in half an hour. He's got a crack mouthpiece by the name of Kells, who throws a lot of weight in these here parts."

"But in that half hour, Chief, you and the boys might persuade him to leave town."

"No go," said the chief. "I'd be out of a job, shamus. Kells is a selectman and pretty strong in county politics."

"Sheldon isn't in this by himself," I said. "He's fronting for someone."

"If you're thinking of Kells, I say no. Sheldon is a client of his because he pays well, that's all."

"Anybody else?"

"There's Frenchy Lemire who owns the Ocean Casino on the beach road. But he's small stuff. Runs a sort of night club there. Sheldon hangs out there because he likes the girls in the show. They run a poker game there once in a while but it's quiet, and as long as nobody complains we leave 'em be."

"Thanks," I said, "for the information. I'll be seeing you."

"So long, shamus. If you pick up anything, let me know. You got a big reputation but that ain't no cause for you to handle this thing yourself. I've got some good boys even if they are only small town cops."

"Thanks, Chief, I'll let you know as soon as I can."

I went out into the bright sunshine. As I looked back I saw the chief pick up the phone.

THE first tailor I called on looked at me like a scared rabbit.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said. "Now please get out of my store. I don't want any trouble."

I made the rounds all over town but nobody would talk. Somebody had clammed them up, but good. Coming out of the last store, I crossed the street to the gray convertible.

"I hope I don't keep you waiting too long between stops," I said. "If I'm going too fast for you let me know."

The scar-faced one got back a little in the car and said: "I ain't looking for a fight, Dobson. It's Sheldon. He wants to see you at the Casino tonight."

"You can tell him I'll be there. Now get the hell away from me fast. I don't like being tailed by cheap hoods."

I was going to give it up as a bad job when I thought I might as well give South Grandview a try. I came down the county road and on the edge of South Grandview there was a little dingy place with a flapping, peeling sign that said: *Herman the Tailor*. Inside the store, hunched over a presser, was an old, tired-looking man. He glanced up at me over a pair of heavy spectacles.

After I got through talking to him, he said: "I lost a son overseas, Mister. He was fighting in the war the same thing that is happening here in this town now. Maybe it wasn't the cleaning racket. Maybe it was bigger. But that's how those things start. I don't want to think my Henry died for nothing. Yes, Mister, I'll talk."

"That's fine, Mr. Herman, I'm listening," I said.

"When the hoodlums asked me to join the association, I told them that I was doing business with Joe Grimes and I didn't want no part of it. Then this Mr. Ellison, the fellow with the scar, grabbed me by the throat and told me if I didn't join, accidents happen, like acid on the clothes. I told them to get out."

"Did you ever see Ellison again?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. "Last week he came in with a fellow named Greer. He told me that Joe was out of business and they would take over the shipments. Their price was ten cents a garment higher than

Joe—but I was stuck. I called Mr. Dodds. He said it was no affair of his. Then I called Mr. Martin, and he said he had no way of picking up my garments. So I had to join up. I had no other way of getting my things to the plant. Yesterday they came in and told me that the price was a quarter more a piece."

"Will you swear all this in a deposition?" I asked.

"Yes, Mr. Dobson."

"Fine, Mr. Herman. I'll be back tomorrow. In the meantime keep quiet about all this."

I left him there all alone in the steamy shop. Making sure I wasn't being tailed, I headed back to the cottage. Joe was waiting for me, nibbling on an apple.

"Any luck?" I asked.

"No. Martin was willing to go along but Dodds turned me down. Martin couldn't go along by himself because Dodds would take the work. Martin says he's anxious to help. I'm going to drop in on him tomorrow and see if we can work something out."

CHAPTER THREE

Brunette Bait

THE Casino was a long, low, rambling affair with an orange tile roof, stucco walls, and a neon sign that must have cost at least ten grand. I put the jalopy in the parking lot, and went in.

There was a smooth band playing muted music while a girl, who had on enough to cover a postage stamp, made with the voice. The tables were crowded and the dance floor, which was as big as a tablecloth, was jammed. I went over to the bar and started to ease onto a red leather stool when some gorilla in a white coat, black bow tie and a couple of ears like dried veal cutlets brushed against me, giving me a quick frisk.

"Sorry," he said, as if he were looking for trouble.

"Sorry, myself," I said, "to know that you're well heeled, too. It's a thirty-eight police positive in a horsehide holster I carry."

He walked off quickly.

I sat there nursing a scotch that had



NATURE'S REMEDY (NR) TABLETS
 —A purely vegetable laxative to relieve constipation without the usual griping, sickening, perturbing sensations, and does not cause a rash. Try NR—you will see the difference. Uncoated or candy coated—their action is dependable, thorough, yet gentle as millions of NR's have proved. Get a 25c box and use as directed.



FUSSY STOMACH?
 RELIEF FOR ACID
 INDIGESTION,
 GAS AND
 HEARTBURN



MENS FULLY GUARANTEED NEW
15-JEWEL WRIST WATCH **13.95**
PLUS TAX

ORIGINALLY sold up to \$55

Sacrificed Because They're POST-WAR Surplus
WATERPROOF • SHOCKPROOF

Luminous dial . . . sweep second hand
 . . . anti-magnetic . . . imported Swiss
 precision movement and case.
 You get them now for a small fraction of
 original prices. Don't delay! Order
 now . . . while they last.

Send only \$1 down payment with order.
 Pay balance to postman on arrival, plus
 postage. Or we pay postage if you en-
 close \$13.95 plus \$1.39 Fed. Tax.

Receive Reg. \$2 expansion band **FREE**
 with prepaid order. Money back in 5
 days if not delighted. Order now.



MARYLAND DISTRIBUTORS, Dept. 185
 501 E. Baltimore St. Baltimore 2, Md.



B. J. Benson

set me back ninety cents. I knew I wouldn't have long to wait. Someone was standing over me.

"Hello, Sheldon," I said, without turning around. "How's the new crockery?"

I saw his knuckles whiten as he grabbed the bar. He was fatter now than when I saw him last, seven years ago. But he was still big and hard enough to give me trouble. His broken nose and thick black hair came up close to me. As I started to move in, he hesitated, saying quickly:

"This is no place to talk. Lemire's got an office out back."

Lemire was sitting behind a white mahogany desk with a leather top. He looked at me with beady black eyes that didn't waver.

"This is Mike Dobson, a private eye from Center City," said Dobson.

Lemire said nothing.

Sheldon turned to me. "I don't want any trouble with you, Dobson. I haven't made a move against you. Why don't you leave me alone?"

"Why don't you leave Joe Grimes alone?"

"That's between me and Grimes. It's a shame Joe had to cry-baby and run for somebody to wipe his nose for him." He shrugged, glanced at Lemire. Lemire nodded.

The door opened and two of his boys came into the room.

"There's a lot at stake in this town," said Sheldon. "It's going to take more than one tough private eye to stop it." He looked at the two hoods. "Besides, I don't think he's so tough."

"Naw," said the white-coated hood.

"I'm going to like this party," I said.

"Take him," said Sheldon.

I grabbed the one with the white coat, and hit him hard. He slammed against the wall. As he started to slide down, the other gorilla came up fast with a sap in his hand. It was no time for pretty fighting so I kicked him in the stomach. He went down with a sick look on his face and didn't get better. I looked around, saw Sheldon standing there with a gun in his hand.

"You're yellow, Sheldon," I said. "You're too yellow to even use that gun. I'm going to ram it down your throat—"

HE MOVED in toward me, raising the barrel to rake me with the sight. I sidestepped and tripped him, at the same time I gave him the heel of my hand on his chin and he went down end over end, hitting up against the corner of the desk.

I looked at Frenchy Lemire, who hadn't made a move, and said: "I know I've been vulgar, Frenchy, but when you have to deal with naughty boy—you know how it is. Tell me, are you in this with Sheldon—"

Just then the door opened once more. "Here we go again," I said.

It was Chief Robinson. He looked at me sharply, then at the men who were starting to take an interest in things again. Lemire sat there like a sphinx.

"I didn't interrupt you none?" asked the chief.

"No," I said. "I've finished."

"Nice night for a ride, shamus," the chief suggested. "How about a lift back to town?"

"Yeah, Chief. I was just leaving."

The chief sent his cruiser back with the uniformed copper and rode back to town in the jolopy with me.

He lit a cigar and said: "One of these days you're going to bite off more than you can chew."

"It looked better than it was," I admitted. "Didn't even work up a sweat."

"A tailor named Herman was held up and murdered in his shop about nine o'clock tonight."

"I'm sorry as hell to hear that," I said earnestly.

There was a uniformed cop in front of the tailor shop when we drove up. We went in. The place looked like it had been plowed through by a bulldozer. Huddled in a corner was Herman, like a bundle of old clothes waiting for the rag man.

"He was robbed," said the chief. "Hit with a blunt instrument. No prints as far as we can see."

"Plain holdup?"

"Looks that way."

"Do you believe it?"

"No," he said. "I called the State troopers. What do you know about Herman, shamus?"

"I talked to him this afternoon. He said he was willing to swear a deposition. . . . What about those punks of

EARN HIGH PAY ALL YOUR LIFE • BE SECURE ALL YOUR LIFE!

Learn one of these 5 LEADING TRADES

"There's Always A Demand For The Man Who Knows"



Be a Qualified Tradesman in 84 weeks (89 in Shoe Repair).

These Essential Trades are Lifetime Trades
—No Age Limit—No Retirement.

Own Your Own Business—Be Independent.

● **PLUMBING:** Every phase from Pipe-Cutting and Threading, Lead-Wiring, to Rough-in Projects, and Completed Installations of entire plumbing system; Blueprint reading and Estimating.

● **DRAFTING:** College-level courses in General Machine and Architectural Drafting; fundamentals in Drafting Mathematics; all under graduate engineers.

● **SHOE REPAIRING:** From simplest repairs on boots and shoes to finest details of reconditioning and re-building.

● **ELECTRICAL:** Technical and Shop Training include Basic Electricity, Residential and Industrial Wiring; Testing and Trouble Shooting, and Appliances repair.

● **AUTOMOTIVE & TRACTOR:** Engine overhaul, transmission and differentials, carburetion, generator and ignition systems, engine tune-up; Hydramatic and Vanomatic Transmissions and general service; latest models used for training.

Our Courses offer complete training under expert instructors with practical experience. 6 hour Classes 5 Days a Week. Our Employment Department Helps You.

VETERANS: National Trade School is approved for G. I. Training under P. L. 346 and P. L. 18.

SEND COUPON FOR FREE INFORMATION NOW, while enrollment is still open

NATIONAL TRADE SCHOOL
2610 Grand Ave., Kansas City 8, Mo. Dept. F

Without obligation to me please send full information on the course checked:

...Automotive and Tractor Technician ...Drafting

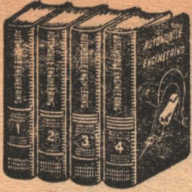
...Plumbing ...Electricity ...Shoe Repairing

Name..... Age.....

Address.....

City..... State.....

Veteran?.....



AUTO BOOKS ON APPROVAL



SEND NO MONEY. Just mail the coupon for a complete set of 4 Big, Thick Auto Books, 20th Edition. Over 3700 Pages! Whether you are a mechanic or helper, expert or apprentice, auto owner or driver, take immediate advantage of this FREE EXAMINATION OFFER.

MAKE GOOD MONEY NOW HOLD A PERMANENT JOB

America wants its automobiles kept in good repair. Men with "know how" are in demand, at big pay. These books will help you get and hold an important job, or give you a chance to go into business for yourself now or later. Any man who half tries to improve himself can learn auto servicing and repairing by this quick reference method. Use the **JIFFY INDEX** to find easily understood answer to any auto problem. These wonder books prepared by eleven of America's great automobile engineers. Many hundreds of valuable illustrations. Send the coupon TODAY.

[A year's consulting privileges with our engineers now given with these books without extra charge.]

Vocational Publishers Since 1898

CAN YOU FIX IT?

These wonder books tell step by step HOW to make difficult repairs and adjustments, how to keep a car at maximum efficiency, including latest improvements in car design and operation. Engine troubles and how to correct them well covered.

4 BIG, THICK VOLUMES Over 2700 pages, 2000 illustrations, wiring diagrams, etc., including Diesel engines. Beautiful modernistic, washable cloth binding.

AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY, Dept. A931
Drexel Ave. at 58th St., Chicago 37, Ill.

I would like to examine your 4-Volume Set of Auto Books. I will pay the delivery charges only, but if I choose I may return them express collect. If after 10 days' use I prefer to keep them, I will send you \$2 and pay the balance at the rate of only \$3 a month until \$24.80 has been paid. Please include consulting service as offered above.

Name.....
Address.....
City..... State.....
Please attach letter stating age, occupation, employer's name and address, and name and address of at least one business man as reference. Men in service, also please give home address.

LAW FREE BOOK



Your FREE copy of "The Law-Trained Man" shows how to gain prestige and greater earnings through Blackstone home law study. All instruction material furnished including 18-volume Law Library written by 65 well-known law authorities. Lawyers, judges among our graduates. LL.B. degree. Low cost; easy terms. Write today.

BLACKSTONE COLLEGE OF LAW 225 N. Michigan Ave.
Dept. 109, Chicago 1, Ill.
A Correspondence Institution Founded in 1890



SEND FOR THIS FREE!

Make money. Know how to break and train horses. Write today for this book FREE, together with special offer of a course in Animal Breeding. If you are interested in Galting and Riding the saddle horse, check here () Do 4 today—now.

BERRY SCHOOL OF HORSEMANSHIP
Dept. 8412 Pleasant Hill, Ohio



SAVE on High Quality GABARDINE Dress Trousers

WARM FOR WINTER

Huge direct-to-you volume enables us to give exceptional value! Fully guaranteed. Genuine virgin wool and fine-spun rayon blended. Warm. Twill weave resists wrinkles, holds crease, gives amazing wear. Expert fashion tailored for perfect fit. Zipper front. Roomy pockets. Blue, Tan, Sand, Lt. or Dr. Brown, Blue-Gray. WAIST: 33-35 pleated or 28-30 Plain.

SEND ONLY \$1 with name, waist size, 1st and 2nd color selection. Pay postman balance plus C.O.D. Or send entire amount, save C.O.D. Money back within 10 days if you're not pleased.

\$12.50 VALUE

\$7.95 PR.

LINCOLN TAILORS Dept. PA-12
Lincoln, Nebr.

B. J. Benson

Sheldon? Are you going to pick them up?"

"I had some boys waiting for them at the Casino. You shouldn't of marked them up, shamus. I'll probably get blamed for that by Kells."

"was looking at Herman's body and thinking of his dead GI son when I said: "Give me ten minutes with those punks, Chief. They'll talk."

"Sorry, young feller. Kells'll have them sprung as soon as we bring them in. Sure as rain they're all alibied up, anyway."

"If it's O.K. with you, Chief, I'm going home to bed."

"Sure, go ahead," he said. "I like you, young feller. Don't try to handle this yourself. No grandstand stuff. Remember."

EARLY the next morning, as I swung out from the beach road toward town, I saw a cream-colored, top-down convertible parked along the road with a bad flat.

There was a pretty girl standing there beside it. She had black hair that came down to her shoulders and she was wearing a big white sailor straw hat, white dress and gloves and white, high-heeled sandals. She looked very, very nice.

When I pulled up alongside she came over and said: "I'm terribly sorry, but I'm in rather a predicament."

"So I see," I said.

"I don't have a spare," she said. "It's being repaired."

"I'd be happy to drop you anywhere you have in mind," I said. I opened the door and she got in. She had nice legs, too.

"I'd be very grateful if you'd drop me at my apartment. It's the Wentworth; on the bay and right down this road," she said.

"Be glad to," I said. "I'm Mike Dobson." I reached for my cigarettes. "Smoke?"

"Oh, thank you," she said. "My name is Gay Standish. If you hadn't come along I don't know what I would have done."

"You'd probably survive and live to be a hundred and two."

"You on vacation, Mr. Dobson?"

Homicide in a Hurry

"Sort of. But the name is Mike. And you—vacation?"

"Sort of," she said. "And the name is Gay." She laughed again. She had nice teeth and her nose was the right size.

It was a swank apartment hotel devoted to the summer money. It was white limestone with bright yellow awnings, and it had a canopy that reached from the entrance, across the side walk, to the road.

"I wouldn't dream of letting you go," she said, "without coming up and having a cool drink—Mike."

"Don't twist my arm," I said. "I'll go quietly."

The windows of the apartment faced the bay and there was a flagstone terrace that opened on the wide french doors of the luxurious living room.

"Nice place you have here," I said, sinking into a white divan. "How do the poor people manage to get along without this?"

"I suppose they manage," she said, taking off her gloves. "What'll it be—scotch or rye?"

"Scotch will be fine."

"Soda?"

"Yes, please."

She disappeared and came back with two tall glasses and sat down beside me. Her hat was off now and she looked even nicer than she did before. She raised her blue eyes to me and said: "Here's luck."

I put the glass down on the blonde mahogany coffee—without drinking.

She looked at me puzzled. "Did I say something wrong?"

"No. You've been doing real good. But I have a pet superstition. I like to swap glasses before I drink."

"I—I'm afraid I don't get you, Mike."

"No, not this time. I know I'm not very smart, but Sheldon sure hurts my feelings. This is the corniest badger game I ever saw."

I saw the red come to her neck and start to work up.

"But I'm afraid there must be some mistake," she said.

"There's no mistake," I said. "I'm taking that glass and you down to the Grand-view Police Station."

"Please," she said, her face seeming to fall to pieces. "I didn't know it was go-

WILL YOU BE 1 OUT OF 9 PERSONS

According to American Medical Association "Journal" one out of every nine persons became a hospital patient last year.

HOSPITALIZATION SICKNESS or ACCIDENT

Man or woman up to Age 90. Enroll NOW! Full benefits paid to adults ages 18 to 45; 70% ages 46 to 61; 50% under 18 and between 61 and 90 years. GOOD IN ANY HOSPITAL IN THE WORLD. You too can get these benefits in one year

for only **\$1⁰⁰** per Month

Hospital Room and Board, General Nursing . . . maximum per day for 30 days----- **\$5⁰⁰**

Surgical Operations maximum (\$5 to \$75 one admission depending on type of operation) **\$150⁰⁰**

Anesthesia, Operating Room, X-ray, Medicines, Laboratory and Ambulance, maximum (Limit \$40 paid during any one admission) **\$100⁰⁰**

Childbirth when policy includes husband, \$5.00 per day for each day hospitalized, limit 10 days----- **\$50⁰⁰**
(Policy must be carried at least 10 months)

ACCIDENTAL DEATH depending on age . . . from----- **\$250 to \$1000**

For your better understanding . . . sickness benefits paid only for sickness originating 90 days after effective date of policy; after 6 months for appendicitis, gall bladder ailment, tonsillectomy, adenoidectomy, rectal disease. Excluded: venereal disease, abortion, miscarriage, ailments not common to both sexes, workmen compensation cases. NO WAITING PERIOD AT ANY TIME on accidental injury . . . immediate protection! Limit payable for hospitalization and surgical expense \$500 each insured in any one year.

READ JUST ONE of the many unsolicited letters we receive.

I acknowledge receipt of your check for hospitalization benefits. My sincere thanks for the promptness and correct way in which my case has been handled by your company.

VICTOR J. MARTINEZ,
224 E. 47th St., New York 17, N. Y.

Low
Cost
For
Entire
Family

	Special Group or Individual Plan			
	Mo.	Quar.	Semi-A.	Annual
Individual 18 or Over	\$1.00	\$2.90	\$5.70	\$11.00
Husband and Wife	\$1.75	\$5.08	\$9.98	\$19.25
Hus., Wife, One Child	\$2.25	\$6.53	\$12.83	\$24.75
One Adult & One Child	\$1.50	\$4.35	\$8.55	\$16.50
Each Add'l Child	\$.25	\$.73	\$1.43	\$2.75

Just write—giving name and address, date of birth, height, weight, race or color, occupation and condition of health for last five years of yourself—and each member of your family to be included. Name and relationship of person to whom your benefits are to be paid in case of death.

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

Write for your Policy today. Enclose as little as one month's premium. You may do this with absolute confidence that if your policy is not entirely satisfactory in every respect, you may return it within 10 days from date you receive it, and the ENTIRE AMOUNT YOU HAVE PAID WILL BE REFUNDED WITHOUT QUESTION. You cannot lose. You are the sole insurer. No agent will call.

AMERICAN LIFE & ACCIDENT INS. CO.

231 American Life Bldg., St. Louis 8, Mo.

WRITE TODAY

AUDELS Carpenters and Builders Guides 4 vols. \$6



Inside Trade Information for Carpenters, Builders, Joiners, Building Mechanics and all Woodworkers. These Guides give you the short-cut instructions that you want—including new methods, ideas, solutions, plans, systems and money saving suggestions. An easy progressive course for the apprentice and student. A practical daily helper and Quick Reference for the master worker. Carpenters everywhere are using these Guides as a Helping Hand to Better Work, Better Work and Better Pay. To get this assistance for yourself, simply fill in and mail FREE COUPON below.

Inside Trade Information On:

How to use the steel square—How to file and set saws—How to build furniture—How to use a mitre box—How to use the chalk line—How to use rules and scales—How to make joints—Carpenters arithmetic—Solving mensuration problems—Estimating strength of timbers—How to set girders and sills—How to frame houses and roofs—How to estimate costs—How to build houses, barns, garages, bungalows, etc.—How to read and draw plans—Drawing up specifications—How to excavate—How to use settings 12, 13 and 17 on the steel square—How to build hoists and scaffolds—skylights—How to build stairs—How to put on interior trim—How to hang doors—How to lath—lay floors—How to paint.



AUDEL, Publishers, 49 W. 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y. Mail Audels Carpenters and Builders Guides, 4 vols., on 7 days' free trial. If OK I will remit \$1 in 7 days and \$1 monthly until \$6 is paid. Otherwise I will return them. No obligation unless I am satisfied.

Name _____
 Address _____
 Occupation _____
 Employed by _____ PER _____

INVENTORS

Patent laws encourage the development of inventions. Our firm is registered to practice before the U. S. Patent Office. Write for further particulars as to patent protection and procedure and "Invention Record" form at once. No obligation.

McMORROW, BERMAN & DAVIDSON
 Registered Patent Attorneys
 150-X Victor Building Washington 1, D. C.

"How to Make Money with Simple Cartoons"

A book everyone who likes to draw should have. It is free; no obligation. Simply address **FREE BOOK**

CARTOONISTS' EXCHANGE
 Dept. 4812 Pleasant Hill, Ohio

Get into Good Paying AUTO BODY and FENDER WORK

BIG DEMAND in Auto Body and Fender work. Start training now in your spare time at home for good pay work. Practical shop experience included. U. E. I. Training covers metal work, welding, painting, etc. Placement service—or we will show you how to start your own shop. Behind U. E. I. TRAINING is a large national organization founded 1927. Write today for **FREE FACTS**—No obligation.

Approved for Training under G.I. Bill

UTILITIES ENGINEERING INSTITUTE
 2523 SHEFFIELD AVE., DEPT. XL-1, CHICAGO 14, ILLINOIS

B. J. Benson

ing to end like this, I swear. Sheldon said it was some kind of a joke he was playing. He said it had to do with a bet."

"What time did he say he'd be here to collect it?"

"In an hour."

"Yeah," I said, "camera and all."

"You mean there was no bet? That he was going to take pictures of you and me—?"

"Skip it," I said. "Maybe you are dumb enough to fall for Sheldon's gag. Anyway, I'll give you a tryout for my team. First, I want your real name. I know it's not Gay Standish."

"It's Mary Leary. I come from Crestlake, a few miles from here."

"All right, Mary. Now tell me how you got mixed up in this."

"I came to the Casino for a job. Mr. Lemire put me on. It's my first chance, and I've been trying hard to make good. Naturally, I was grateful to Mr. Lemire for the chance. Then Sheldon told me about this bet and asked me to do him a favor. I didn't want to, but Mr. Lemire told me to do it. It's very hard to break into show business. There are tougher ways, Mike."

"Yeah," I said flatly. "But I'm not sure that you thought this was all a joke."

"I was suspicious. I'll admit that I didn't like doing it."

"Who's apartment is this. Yours?"

"No, Mike. Not on my salary. It belongs to Joan Kelsey. She's Mr. Kells secretary. Mr. Kells is a Grandview selectman."

"Nice salary for a secretary. Now, get this: I want you to tell Sheldon and his friends the truth when they come here. Tell them that the pickup worked and that I was here but I didn't take the drink. You can stop there, except if he asks you if I seemed suspicious. You say no. Then you go back and keep your eyes and ears open. If you find out anything, call the Grandview police and leave a message for me to call you."

"You sound like a detective," she said. "Are you?"

"Sort of," I said. "Now you have everything straight. You're not afraid?"

"Not any more," she said. "You're very clever to have seen through it all."

Homicide in a Hurry

"No," I said, "I'm not very clever. I have a pretty good memory. You see, I saw you when you were singing last night. You weren't dressed as much as you are now, but I saw you and that was enough."

I made for the door.

"Good-by, Mike," she said, a little chuckle in her voice.

I HEADED back to town. As I drove the jalopy past the police station I saw the State Police cruiser parked there. I parked the car in front of the Central Hotel and got a handful of silver from the desk. Using a pay station, I called a friend of mine at the Seacoast National Bank in Center City. He didn't like the idea I had—but we were old friends. . . .

Then I treated myself to a lobster dinner at the Grandview Cafe and went up to see Raymond Kells.

The girl at the desk was a fancy fluff that looked as if she belonged in a burlesque chorus instead of a lawyer's office.

"What can I do for you, handsome?" she asked.

"You can't do a thing for me," I said. "I want to see Kells."

"My, what great big shoulders the big bad wolf has," she said. "Now if you talk real sweet to me I might let you see Mr. Kells."

"Look, sister, I'm busy. Do you announce me—or do I walk right in?"

She looked at me for a minute while her eyes slitted. "Who will I say is calling?"

"Mike Dobson," I turned my back and looked out the window while she wiggled over to Kell's private office.

She came back in a moment.

"He'll see you, wise guy," she said.

Raymond Kells was a red-faced man about six feet tall with thin sandy hair and a bay window. He wore an expensive, well-tailored, white gabardine suit.

He stood up and offered me his hand but I didn't see it.

"This is a pleasant surprise, Mr. Dobson," he said. "I've been about to get in touch with you."

"That's fine. This will save you the trouble. You're a leading citizen in this town, Kells, and also a big gun in county politics. As such, you have a certain obli-

NEW MILANO

IMPORTED BRIAR
with "LOCKMOUNT"



Famous Milano pipe with added feature ... Lockmount Hesson Guard. It screws into bowl for tighter, firmer fit. Stops gool Mister, if you want a pipe that always stays clean and dry, get a Milano!



"LOCKMOUNT"

GUARANTEES TIGHT FIT

NO GOO CAN PASS

LIFETIME HESSON GUARD

PERMANENT
CORK SEAL
KEEPS VITAL
SHANK CLEAN



\$1.50

IMPORTED
BRIAR

WM. DEMUTH & CO., INC., NEW YORK 22

HOME-STUDY BRINGS BIGGER PAY

Don't be caught napping when Opportunity knocks. Prepare now for advancement and more money. Free 48-Page Books Tell How. Write for the book on the business field you like—plus "Ten Years' Promotion in One," a book which has helped many men. Get the facts today.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Accountancy | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C.F.A. Coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Law: LL.B. Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Foremanship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Stenotypy
(Machine Shorthand) |

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

A Correspondence Institution

Dept. 12334-R 417 So. Dearborn St. Chicago 5, Ill.

How To Relieve Bronchitis

Creomulsion relieves promptly because it goes right to the seat of the trouble to help loosen and expel germ laden phlegm and aid nature to soothe and heal raw, tender, inflamed bronchial mucous membranes. Tell your druggist to sell you a bottle of Creomulsion with the understanding you must like the way it quickly allays the cough or you are to have your money back.

CREOMULSION
for Coughs, Chest Colds, Bronchitis

Sterling Silver

SADDLE RING



Authentic replica of championship rodeo saddle Handsomely formed from solid Sterling Silver by expert silver craftsmen. Men's, Women's, Children's styles. Sent on approval

SEND NO MONEY! Just clip ad and mail with name, address, ring size and style. Pay postman only \$2.98 plus few cents postage on arrival. Or send cash and we mail postpaid. Wear for 5 days. If not delighted, return for refund.

\$2.98
POST PAID
(TAX PAID)

WESTERN CRAFTSMEN • Dept. 217 Omaha 2, Nebraska

PRICES SLASHED! ALUMINUM PIPES

\$4.50 pipe for \$1.00. Imported briar bowl, hard rubber stem, air cooled aluminum shank straight or curved. No filters required. A perfect Christmas gift. Send check or money order, we pay postage. C. O. D. orders filled on request. Write for FREE catalog of pipes and cigars. **SATISFACTION GUARANTEED OR YOUR MONEY BACK**

Eddie THE CIGAR MAN

Dept. P-1, 1096 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn 5, N. Y.



High School Course at Home Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work—prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H. S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dept. H949, Drexel at 58th, Chicago 37

SKIN Irritations!

Now that clean, powerful, penetrating Moone's Emerald Oil is available at first-class drug stores all over the country, thousands have found helpful relief from the distressing itching and torture of rashes, eczema, poison ivy and other externally caused skin troubles.

Not only does the intense itching, burning or stinging quickly subside, but thru its sanitative and emollient properties healing is more quickly promoted. All druggists 65c & \$1.25. If dealer temporarily out of stock send one dollar for the large size, all charges paid to

INTERNATIONAL LABORATORIES, ROCHESTER 11, N. Y.

B. J. Benson

gation toward keeping this town clean."

"What are you driving at, Dobson?"

"Since Sheldon moved in there has been intimidation, a truck wrecked, a man beat up, and now a pretty rotten murder. If you will withdraw your support of Sheldon, we'll have an easier time of cleaning up this mess. This is too nice a town to have cheap gangsters running all over it."

"Bugs always said you had a great sense of humor," he said. "I have a great respect for your reputation as a private detective, but I think it presumptuous of you to tell me how this town should be run. No offense, you understand. But after all, your presence in Grandview is purely in an ex officio capacity. You've laid yourself open to assault and battery charges which, so far, we have tolerantly overlooked. Yet you have the effrontery to come in here and to take issue with a perfectly legal enterprise sponsored by Mr. Sheldon."

"Furthermore, I would be remiss in my duty as a member of the Chamber of Commerce not to encourage the establishment of new business in Grandview. As for your fantastic assumption that a routine holdup slaying has any connection with a legally founded business organization—"

"While you're at it," I said, "why not put in a good word for Sheldon's gorillas."

"I'll admit that Mr. Sheldon's associates at the present time are not—er—shall we say . . . the type of citizen that we would like to see in Grandview. But, I have been assured by my client, Mr. Sheldon, that the arrangement is purely a temporary measure. After the association is firmly organized they will be sent away."

"Your fancy double talk has been a waste of time on me," I said. "It doesn't buy you a thing."

"Your candor and frankness is refreshing," Kells said. "Shall I put my cards on the table?"

"I'm listening."

"Mr. Sheldon is always looking for bright young men to be associated with him in his business ventures. He pays very well."

Homicide in a Hurry

"You're trying to buy me off, Kells?"

"You're rather a crude young man," he said. "I'm going to let that pass. Mr. Sheldon is offering you a job. He has a great deal of respect for your ability."

"Listen, Kells," I said. "I earn my money honestly. It's not much but when I pick it up I don't have to hold my nose while I count it."

"All right, Dobson," he said. "I've been patient with you. Now we'll have to be unpleasant about it. We're giving you an hour to get out of Grandview. If you don't, you're liable to get hurt or wind up in a cell for a while. Mike Dobson may be big stuff upstate but he doesn't mean a thing in this county. Now get out."

I reached over the desk and slapped him hard across the face.

"I don't go for threats, Kells," I said. "I get mad and lose my temper."

As I went out the door, the girl was hurriedly settling herself in her chair.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Corpse Talks

IT WAS three o'clock that afternoon when I got back to the cottage. The tide was coming in and the air had a good, cool, salty smell to it. I thought I'd borrow a pair of trunks from Joe and go for a swim. But as I parked the car behind Joe's, I noticed something wrong with the screening on the porch.

There were several holes in it.

I pulled the .38 out of my holster and went up on the porch. There was a cluster of bullet holes on the wall of the porch high up, and on the floor there were streaks of blood and some scuff marks. I edged in through the half-open door to the living room.

There was Joe on the floor. He was dead.

I cased the bedrooms and kitchen rapidly, and then I went back into the room. Joe lay on his stomach. He'd been dead about an hour. He had four slugs in him that had entered across his shoulders and left arm. I turned him over slightly. He was laying in a pool of blood and near his right arm, on the floor, there



no gift like it

AMAZING NEW

Stubcaster[®]
CASTING AND TROLLING ROD

Give your favorite fisherman a gift that won't be duplicated! — the astonishing new rod that's amazing experts! Perfect supplement to any fisherman's equipment. Only 21" over-all, yet STUBCASTER'S patented coil spring gives thrilling, live, 5 ft. action. Breaks down to 14", fits in tackle box. STUBCASTER'S shorter arc means safer casting, greater accuracy and distance. This Christmas give new fishing thrills!

\$5.95 without reel



Money back guarantee! If dealer can't supply, send check or money order to

WALTCO PRODUCTS
Dept. 95-P

2300 W. 49th St., Chicago 9, Ill.

Phenomenal Value • Treasured Lifetime Gift

INCABLOC
Shock
Resistant
Feature

17 JEWEL • 2 PUSH BUTTON

CHRONOGRAPH

"4-in-1" Precision Instrument

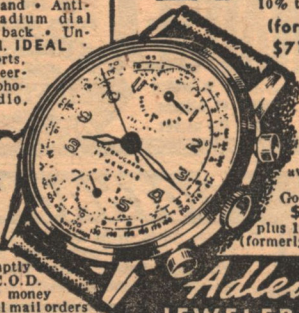
• WRIST WATCH • TELEMETER
• STOP WATCH • TACHOMETER

Sweep second hand • Anti-magnetic • Radium dial
Stainless steel back • Un-breakable crystal. IDEAL for use in sports, sciences, engineering, medicine, photography, radio, aviation.

\$29.75
plus 10% tax

(formerly \$71.50)

OUR FAMOUS
GUARANTEE
MONEY BACK
in 10 DAYS
if not satisfied
for any reason



Also available in 18K Gold Case \$64.50 plus 10% tax (formerly \$125)

Mail orders promptly filled. Shipped C.O.D. or send check or money order. Address all mail orders to: ADLEW JEWELERS, 152 W. 42 St. N.Y. 18 (Dept. 127)

Adlew JEWELERS

117 W. 42nd St., New York 18

Don't buy a
Diamond Ring
before seeing our Catalog!

By specializing in diamonds from estates, banks and unredeemed pledges, we are able to offer a large collection of fine diamonds at a substantial savings.

Every diamond is sold with an iron clad money back guarantee. We will gladly send you the diamond you select for your personal examination, before buying, and without obligation.

Every diamond has been reset in brand new mountings of the latest design. Send for our Free Illustrated Catalog of outstanding diamond values from \$10 to \$10,000. References: Your own bank or any mercantile agency.

BERMAN'S COLLATERAL LOAN BANK, DEPT PF
636-38 W. Baltimore St. Baltimore 1, Md.

STOPS FOGGY WINDSHIELDS
NEW Chemical Mitt

Amazing Discovery! Autoists will discover new "NO-FOG" Windshield Cleaner. Simply glide over windshield chemically-treated Mitt—at once glass sparkle crystal clear. Blurry mist, frost, sleet, snow disappear like magic. Stops fogging. *Sells like wild!*

SAMPLES FOR AGENTS Sample offer sent immediately to all who send name at once. A penny postal will do. **SEND NO MONEY—just your name.** KRISTEE CO., 1446 Bar Street, AKRON, OHIO

LEARN MEAT CUTTING
At Home — In Spare Time



Get into the vital meat industry. Concise, practical Home Training based on 25 years proven instruction methods used at National's famous resident school. Prepares you for bigger pay as Meat Cutter, Supervisor, market manager or more money in your own store. Go as rapidly as your spare time permits. Diploma. Start NOW to turn your spare hours into money. Send for FREE bulletin today. No obligation.

National School of Meat Cutting, Inc., Dept. K-15, Toledo 4, Ohio

PLAY GUITAR LIKE THE COWBOYS DO... 8 LESSONS



Just out—very latest guaranteed, simple, easy method. Play cowboy songs the Western way in a few minutes by ear. Surprise and amaze your friends. Be in big demand at parties, camps, public entertainments, on the radio, etc. 18 Complete Lessons.

SEND NO MONEY. Pay postman only \$1.00 charges, or send \$1.00 and get EXTRA SONGS plus postcard and C.O.D. Positive money back guarantee. *Rush order today.* WESTERN RANGER STUDIO, Dept. 4512, Hutchinson, Kan.

NAUSEA

...Helps to control organs of balance. Quiets the nerves.

THE WORLD OVER

due to high altitudes, speed and sudden changes, relieved with



TOOTHACHE?

Quick relief with Dent's. Use Dent's Tooth Gum or Dent's Tooth Drops for cavity toothaches. Use Dent's Dental Pouttice for pain or soreness in gums or teeth. At all drug stores.

"Since 1888"

DENT'S

TOOTH GUM
TOOTH DROPS
DENTAL POUTTICE

B. J. Benson

was some lettering written out in blood.

—It spelled: *potokale*.

Over in the corner was the carbine. I carefully used a pencil to open the bolt. The gun hadn't been fired recently.

I went over and looked at the bowl of fruit and was going to peel myself an orange but I thought the better of it. I went out and drove down to the gas station and called the chief.

"What do you make of it, shamus?" asked the Chief. He pushed back the visored cap with the gold braid.

"Joe was standing on the porch," I said. "Someone fired at him with a sub-machine gun. Maybe one or two bursts. He didn't die right away, because he was able to drag himself into the house. I think he was going after the carbine. When he felt he was going under and couldn't make it, he wrote that word on the floor. There was some kind of a trick to get him on the porch without his carbine, because Joe was smart and kept the place well covered. Maybe it was somebody he knew."

"What about this potokale business?" asked the chief.

"I don't know, yet. Is there anybody by that name in town? A girl? Maybe it's the name of a place around here."

"Not that I know of."

"That word is important. Joe wouldn't write that when he was dying, just for the hell of it."

"Did Joe and you have some kind of code or something? It's a foreign sounding word."

"No—no code," I said. "Wait a minute, Chief. I've got it, I think. I've got to get back to Center City."

"I can't let you leave town, shamus."

"I'll be back in four hours," I said. "Joe and I soldiered together in the war. There's got to be a payoff on this. I'm going, Chief. Nobody can stop me now. Nobody."

"If you're not back in four hours—well, it'll be ex-Chief Robinson."

"I'll be back in four hours."

"By the way, shamus. Somebody hijacked a milk wagon on the beach road this afternoon while the man was making a call. That may account for the surprise on Joe. We found the wagon on our way

Homicide in a Hurry

down here." He paused. "Good luck, son."

It was ten-thirty when I drove up to the police station in the jalopy. The chief was sitting at his desk. In the chair in front of him was Lieutenant Jim Fowley of the State Police.

"Hello, Mike," said Jim Fowley. "We were going to send out a pick-up call on you."

"I'm surprised at you, Jim. You know me better than that."

"Yes, Mike," said the trooper. "But you've been mixed up in two killings, now."

"I'm stringing along with him, Jim," put in the chief.

"Where's everybody tonight?" I asked. "The town looks deserted."

The chief said: "The whole town's at the Casino. It's the annual summer dance. Lemire lets the local folks in free tonight."

"Fine," I said. "This thing is about ready to wrap up. Pick up some of your lads, and let's go."

Fowley reached for the phone. "My boys wouldn't want to miss this. I'll call the Fairfax barracks to send a couple of cruisers."

"No," said the chief. "Let my boys handle it. They never get much of a chance at this kind of thing. You can come along for the ride."

WHEN we got to the Casino, the sign was lit up like a million bucks, casting a glow over the waters of the bay. We could hear the music when we snapped the lights off the prowl cars and came into the parking lot.

When the lug came up with the parking tags, I said: "Keep him here, Chief. I don't want anybody to know who my friends are."

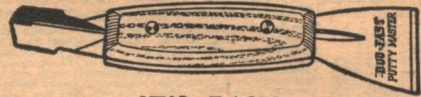
The chief hustled him into the back.

"I'm going in alone, Chief," I said. "Send your boys out around the place to see that nobody gets away. And you and Jim cover the front entrance. Give me ten minutes, then come in."

There was a lot of smoke inside and the girl show was doing its stuff, so I didn't attract much attention. I went to Lemire's office and walked right in.

Lemire was standing over Mary Leary

IT'S NEW THE PUTTY MASTER PLACES GLAZIERS SKILL IN YOUR HANDS



IT'S EASY

A putty knife with the patented shaper that anyone can operate—packs, shapes and trims putty perfectly with one stroke and allows only the right amount of putty to be applied—a time and money saving item that will more than pay for itself.

Only \$1.00 Postpaid
anywhere in the United States.

I am enclosing \$1.00—please send me one Duo-Fast Putty Master.

PUTTY MASTER
877 Fletcher Street, Chicago 14, Illinois

Name

Address

City and State

Learn RADIO TELEVISION ELECTRONICS

National Schools, an institution with almost 50 years experience, will show you how to get into this profitable and fascinating field . . . in your spare time.

You build this modern long-distance superheterodyne receiver. Conduct many other experiments with standard equipment sent you. Professional quality multimeter included.



SHOP METHOD HOME TRAINING

By a Real Resident Trade School

Vastly increased number of Radio receivers, development of FM Broadcasting, Television, Electronics applications demand trained men to repair, service and maintain equipment. Examine National Shop Method Home Training carefully. Study one lesson free. Mail coupon for important information. Both Resident and Home Study Training Offered.

APPROVED FOR VETERANS

NATIONAL SCHOOLS

LOS ANGELES 37, CALIF. • EST. 1905



MAIL OPPORTUNITY COUPON FOR QUICK ACTION

National Schools, Dept. PFG-12
4000 South Figueroa Street
Los Angeles 37, California

Mail in envelope
or paste on
penny postal.

Send me your FREE book and the sample lesson of your course. I understand no salesman will call on me.

Name

Address

City..... Zone..... State.....

() Check here if Veteran of World War II



EARN WHILE YOU LEARN RADIO!

F. L. SPRAYBERRY,
Pres. SPRAYBERRY
ACADEMY OF RADIO

**PREPARE NOW FOR YOUR OWN
BUSINESS OR A GOOD PAY JOB IN
RADIO-ELECTRONICS-TELEVISION**

The Sprayberry Course is practical, down-to-earth—you learn by building, testing, repairing actual Radio sets and equipment! I send you 8 big kits of real, professional radio parts... plus you work doing over 176 experiments, including building a powerful superhet radio and 16-range test meter. I start you at the beginning. Learn Radio through simple, easy, interesting lessons. Get the facts about Sprayberry Training. Mail coupon below TODAY for my book "How To Make Money in Radio, Electronics and Television"—plus sample lesson—**BOTH FREE, VETERANS' Approved for G. I. Training under Public Laws 16 and 346.**

SPRAYBERRY ACADEMY OF RADIO
F. L. SPRAYBERRY, President
53128 Sprayberry Bldg., PUEBLO, COLO.

Rush my FREE Sample Lesson and Book.
 Check here if a Veteran

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY and Zone _____ STATE _____

FREE HOBBY BOOK

**FOR MEN and BOYS
TELLS HOW TO LEARN TO
MOUNT BIRDS** and animals, fish, pets,
and all game. Learn to
TAN SKINS with wonderful Krome-Tan. Simple as
ABC. Many earn big PROFITS in spare time mounting
for others. Great FUN. Wild game not needed. Over
500,000 students since 1908. **RUSH** postal TODAY for **STRANGE
BOOK**, over 100 game pictures. **FREE**. No obligation. **State AGE!**
N. W. School of Taxidermy, 4212 Elwood Bldg., Omaha 2, Neb.



ACCOUNTANT BECOME AN EXPERT

Executive Accountants and C. P. A.'s earn \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year. Thousands of firms need them. We train you thoroly at home in spare time for C. P. A.'s examinations or executive accounting positions. Previous experience unnecessary. Personal training under supervision of staff of C. P. A.'s. Placement counsel and help. Write for free book, "Accountancy, the Profession That Pays."
**LASALLE Extension University, 417 So. Dearborn St.
A Correspondence Institution, Dept. 12334-H, Chicago 5, Ill.**

INVENTORS

Learn how to protect your invention. Secure "Patent Guide" together with "Record of Invention" form—without obligation.
CLARENCE A. O'BRIEN & HARVEY JACOBSON
Registered Patent Attorneys
826-K District National Bldg. Washington 5, D. C.

Reliable man with car wanted at once to call on farmers. Wonderful opportunity. \$15 to \$20 a day. No experience or capital required. Permanent. Write today.
McNESS COMPANY
Dept. 106 Freeport, Illinois

STAMMER?

This new 128-page book, "Stammering, Its Cause and Correction," describes the Bogue Unit Method for scientific correction of stammering and stuttering—successful for 47 years.
Benj. N. Bogue, Dept. 4825, Circle Tower, Indianapolis 4, Ind.



LAW

STUDY AT HOME FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS and LARGE PERSONAL EARNINGS. 30 years expert instruction—over 114,000 students enrolled. LL.B. Degree awarded. All texts furnished. Easy payments. Send for FREE BOOK—"Law and Executive Guidance"—NOW!
AMERICAN EXTENSION SCHOOL OF LAW
Dept. 96-B, 646 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Ill.

B. J. Benson

in her racy singing outfit. She was crying. There was a red welt across her face.

"Oh, Mike," she cried. "Mike. They know everything. Please go away. Please."

"Never mind the girl, Lemire," I said. "Call the head waiter and have Sheldon and Gil Martin come in."

He picked up the phone and whispered in to it.

"Well, well, it talks," I said, and I went over to him and clipped him on the jaw. Then I propped him up, with his glazed eyes staring vacantly.

"I can't stand his voice," I said to Mary. "Now you take a walk."

"You'll be all right, Mike?" she asked anxiously.

"Everything is fine now," I said.

As she left the room she passed Sheldon and Martin coming in. She looked at them and hurried by.

This Martin was a short, squat guy, with a thin wisp of a mustache and slick, black hair. There was an air of smoothness about him. Sheldon stood there staring at Lemire.

"It's all over," I said to him, showing him the muzzle of my .38. "Joe talked before he died."

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Sheldon.

"Don't dummy up on me," I said. "You know Joe found out that you and Martin were in this together."

"If you're through with this comedy," said Martin, "I'll return to my guests."

"You're not leaving, Martin," I said. "Stand there against the wall. Now turn and face it." I went over to Martin and pushed him up a little closer to the wall, then I went over to Sheldon and stood him beside his partner. Going quickly through his clothes, I found Sheldon's wallet in his inside breast pocket. I took it over to the desk and opened it, still keeping them covered.

"Well," I said. "Fresh, clean one-thousand-dollar bills, each one numbered and marked by the Seacoast National."

"You fool," said Martin, looking at Sheldon. Martin, shooting through his pocket, fired two shots into Sheldon before I could put a slug in Martin's shoulder.

Homicide in a Hurry

That was the end of it. Lieutenant Fowler and the chief with a couple of cops came in like a landing party. They had two of Sheldon's hoods and Lawyer Kells in tow.

Lieutenant Fowler turned Sheldon over. "He's gone," he said.

"RIGHT smart work," said the chief. "But you had to have an in with the bank to do it. The teller had to record every bill that was drawn out of the accounts of Dodds, Martin, Fells, Lemire—and even me, come to think of it."

The chief reached into a drawer of the old desk, came out with a cigar, lighted it and said: "Well, the money was traced to Martin's withdrawal and Sheldon had it. Martin's got a homicide rap on him and the D.A. is figuring some kind of conspiracy charge on Kells. So I guess that winds up the whole business for you, son."

"All except Ellison," I said. "He wasn't in the roundup."

"No," said Jim Fowler. "We had him over at the State Police barracks. Ellison knocked off Herman just after you left him. He wasn't satisfied with taking all of Herman's folding money. No, he had to go after the silver in the cash register. He left a big enough print in the cash drawer to send him to the chair."

"Thanks, Jim," I said.

"No man can handle a case like this alone," said the trooper. "But you made a good try. Now what about this potokale business?"

"It really sounds more complicated than it is," I said. "But it was pretty simple. This Martin wasn't satisfied with a good cleaning business, he had to get hungry. So he contacted Lemire to find out if he could get someone in here to organize the cleaning business—old style. Lemire brought Sheldon in for the strong-arm work.

"They needed a strong political tie-up because this Grandview stuff was just the beginning. They planned to branch out, so they brought in Kells and paid him well. The only fly in the ointment was Joe Grimes.

"It was all the process of elimination. Through the bank I was able to find out where the payoff was. I made mistakes,

LEATHER FOR A LIFETIME . . .

. . . of handsome service is featured in the Chevalier, Cresco's finest horsehide jacket. Dual-Action Sleeves* allow greater freedom; clever adjustable sleeve lengths; slash pockets; rayon-lined. Clean, trim style lines!



\$33⁵⁰

The Chevalier

Front Quarter Pony . . .

. . . is the best-looking, longest-wearing horsehide. Soft, supple, finished to a deep rich brown or tan. Almost impossible to wear out. Choice gift for Christmas.

If None at Your Dealer
Order Direct. State Size,
Color and Dealer's Name.



*PAT.
APP. FOR

Learn A Trade NOW! PRACTICAL SHOP TRAINING!

In Our Chicago Shops

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AUTO MECHANICS | <input type="checkbox"/> WELDING—ARC and GAS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DIESEL MECHANICS | <input type="checkbox"/> MACHINIST |
| <input type="checkbox"/> REFRIGERATION | <input type="checkbox"/> PIANO TUNING |

BODY-FENDER
Above Approved For G. I.'s and Civilians

One of America's Leading Practical Schools
7 Floors of Fully Equipped Shops
Over 48,000 Successful Graduates
Expert Individual Instruction
Learn by Doing—Low Living Expense
Established 1902—Day and Evening Classes

Also the following Home Study Courses

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PLASTIC | <input type="checkbox"/> REFRIGERATION | <input type="checkbox"/> DIESEL |
|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|

—CALL IN PERSON OR MAIL THIS AD TO—

GREER SHOP TRAINING

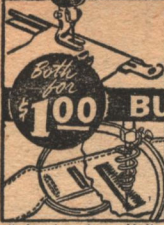
(Dept. P.G.A.17) 460 South State St., Chicago 5, Ill.
Please send without obligation free information regarding trade checked above. (Specify whether you are a Veteran or Civilian)

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

HEMSTITCHER



Hemstitch on any sewing machine with this handy attachment. Does two piece, criss-cross, inside, circular and hemstitching for pleats; also tucking, smocking and piecing. Makes ruffs, corseters, slippers, etc. out of any material. Easy directions included.

BUTTON HOLER

Makes button holes on your sewing machine instead of by hand. Also darns stockings, sews buttons, zippers; and can be used for quilting. Sews in any direction—front, back or sideways.

SEND NO MONEY—Merely send your name, address and pay postman \$1.00 plus postage on arrival. Or, send \$1.00 with order, and we mail attachments postage paid. You risk nothing. Satisfaction guaranteed or \$1.00 back.

LELANE CO. Dept. PG-128 Box 571 Kansas City 30, Mo.

RING for "WOLVES"



If you're a "wolf", you'll want to wear this unusual, emblematic ring. Handsomely formed from solid Sterling Silver. Girls Give this ring to the wolves you know!

SEND NO MONEY! Just clip ad and mail with name, address, ring size and style. Pay postman only \$2.98 plus few cents postage on arrival. Or send cash and we mail postpaid. Wear for 5 days. If not delighted, return for refund.

\$2.98
POST PAID
(TAX PAID)

WESTERN CRAFTSMEN • Dept. 417 Omaha 2, Nebraska



ROLLING THE CITRUS GOLD

VITAMINS for you and hard-earned dollars for the Santa Fe—that's the story of 133,000 reefer-loads of citrus fruits moved out of Southern California each year. Hop a string of top-iced cars at Needles, for a roaring greenball run across the Arizona desert. Your ticket is a copy of the December issue of **RAILROAD MAGAZINE**, now on your newsstand, or send 35c to—

RAILROAD

MAGAZINE

205 E. 42nd St., New York City 17

B. J. Benson

like everybody else. I should have kept Herman on ice and I should have sent Joe out of town until I wound it up.

"Joe told me yesterday that he was going to drop in on Martin. Martin didn't expect him. Joe must have stumbled on the payoff between Martin and Sheldon. He thought he got away clear but Sheldon went after him. He knew that the only way he could get to Joe was by a trick, so he used the milk wagon. When the milk wagon came up, Joe went out on the porch to get his milk and Sheldon shot him from the road. You know the rest."

"All except this potokale business," said the Chief.

"You gave me the clue to that," I said, "when you mentioned that it was a foreign-sounding word. When Joe and I were overseas in Italy, our outfit was slated to jump off into Albania, but the war was over before we had a chance to make it.

"In the meantime they had given us an Albanian language guide to study and Joe and I would be at it all the time. Joe was crazy about fruit and he memorized all the Albanian words for fruit.

"I remembered that when the chief mentioned that potokale was a foreign sounding word, but I couldn't place it. I found out why when I went back to Center City. I got home and got out my Albanian language guide. There was no word potokale but there was a word *portokale* and that meant oranges in English.

"So before I came here I went back to the cottage and looked at the oranges in the bowl and there was one that had been bored through with a fruit reamer. In it was a thin roll of tissue with the whole story on it. That's your evidence, Chief."

"Joe must have figured that he couldn't trust anybody," said Lieutenant Fowler. "So as soon as he got back from Martin's he wrote the evidence down and hid it in the oranges. I guess he didn't even trust the chief. It could be that he expected Sheldon back to finish him off."

"It could be," I said. "I'm glad it's cleaned up. There was no dough in this case, but it seems to me that if a guy goes out and fights a war, he's got a right to an even break."

THE END

Ready for the Rackets

(Continued from page 10)

On the House

Dear Sir:

While on vacation, my wife and I were sitting in a cocktail lounge. We noticed two men at the bar, who were beginning to carry on a loud argument. Each was accompanied by a friend who was trying politely to quiet them down. Finally one of the men shoved the other off his seat. The fight was on! Everyone in the place got to their feet, to get a better look, or get out of the way.

Soon a large crowd had gathered around, watching the two go at it hot and heavy, while a burly bartender was trying to separate them. He finally succeeded, by telling them he had called the police. At this remark, they both left very hurriedly.

Returning to our table, we sat discussing the matter when my wife opened her purse, and discovered her wallet missing. We called the manager, and were reporting the incident when another woman came up and reported the same thing. Further inquiry revealed several women had money taken out of their purses, which they had left on their tables during the excitement.

Later we learned that this same trick had been pulled before. Two men would start a fight in similar establishments, and while everybody was confused, their two companions would shyly go around scooping up all small valuables and money which had been left on the tables. Then they would slip out unnoticed.

That slugging match cost us eighteen dollars. Pretty expensive for a put-up fight.

R. M.
Flint, Michigan

Bad Reproduction

Dear Sir:

Answering a knock on my door I was greeted by a man who said he represented a well-advertised photo company. He solicited several types of work but nothing interested me until he mentioned a special service they offered of copying old pictures.

I had only one of my mother—she had been dead some time—and I explained I had long wanted some copies made for my sisters. He immediately described the wonderfully accurate and speedy job they did, even if expensive.

I ordered the copies and gave him the ten dollar deposit he said was required. The pictures were to reach me within ten days, COD for the balance. No word came in 20 days and when I sent an inquiry to the company they immediately replied that they had never had a salesman in my territory and were sorry to hear of the incident.

Naturally I hated to lose the money but the picture was far more valuable in sentimental value and impossible to replace.

Minnie L. Sigler
Fullerton, Louisiana

MEN and
WOMEN



... await in World Trade. Work for others or start your own full or part time business in this big-money industry. Your home can be your office. Buy and sell world-wide without capital by mail order as I have. My practical low cost home study course teaches you quickly at home. World Trade is a common sense business which I teach you in a common sense way, based on *my own twenty-five years' practical experience*. Simple words—clear instruction. No need to know or learn a foreign language. No previous special experience or schooling needed. World Trade Certificate awarded. Authorities predict that the *Marshall Plan will expand U.S. Exports* to \$60 BILLION over the next five years; also billions in Imports will result. World Trade now offers the biggest opportunities in history for newcomers. Send today for FREE INFORMATION. Airmail reaches me overnight.

MAIL FOR FREE DETAILS

B. L. MELLINGER, Director, The Mellinger Co.
1422-BU WESTWOOD BLVD • LOS ANGELES 24, CALIF.
SEND FREE LITERATURE ABOUT MY OPPORTUNITIES IN WORLD TRADE

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

VETERAN? _____

OCCUPATION? _____

AGE? _____



DIAMOND CUT ZIRCON MODELED AFTER \$1500 RING

Impressive Looking - Superbly Mounted in
1/20-12 KT Gold Filling

ONLY \$4.85 (plus 20% Fed. Tax)

PERFECT GIFT A KNOCKOUT!

Mail Size or String with Money Order to . . .

Dept. H
SHERRY'S 229 Main St., Norfolk, Va.
WRITE FOR FREE GIFT CIRCULAR

FUR-FISH-GAME



is just the magazine you have been looking for. It is edited by none other than A. V. Harding, an ardent hunter and fisherman. It is a monthly publication of 64 or more pages chocked full of interesting articles illustrated with actual photos on HUNTING, FISHING, FUR FARMING, TRAPPING, etc. Each issue also has many departments—The Gun Rack, Fish & Tackle, Dogs, Travel, Fur Farming, Trapline, Fur Markets and Question Box—edited by well-known men such as Lincoln, Robinson, Decker, and Dalley. Get a copy at the newsstand.



Price 20c a copy or \$2.40 per year, or save by sending for

Cover actual photo reproduced in natural color.

Special "Get Acquainted" Offer

Nine Months for \$1.00 (Save 80c)

or write for a full year's subscription, \$1.50

Guaranteed to please sportsmen or Fur-Fish-Game will refund your money if first copy returned in 10 days. Clip ad, fill in address and send one dollar bill, check, stamps or money order to FUR-FISH-GAME, 405 Standard Bldg., Columbus 15, Ohio

Name

Address

Paint Your Car!

AND 1001
OTHER ITEMS

AMAZING
NEW

"Super" CARONIZE

FACTORY-FINISH TYPE
AUTO ENAMEL

One Quart Covers? One Hour to Apply! One Hour to Dry!

Just Wipe it on!

Handy
Applicator



Makes Your Old Car
Gleam Like New!

INCLUDED AT NO EXTRA COST

Now you can quickly and easily make your old car look almost NEW! Just give it a speedy coat of new "SUPER" CARONIZE. With "SUPER" CARONIZE all back-breaking labor is eliminated... NO BRUSHING, SPRAYING, MASKING, BUFFING OR SCRAPING is necessary. Simply clean car and WIPE ON this sensational new fast-drying paint. In just a short time, your car will GLEAM with a mirror-bright finish that LASTS FOR YEARS. "SUPER" CARONIZE won't peel, crack, chip in spite of rain, snow or sun,

THE RESULT OF MONTHS OF LABORATORY RESEARCH!

"Super" Caronize smoothly covers your car because it contains genuine THERMOREZ, the very same type synthetic resin as is used in finishing new cars. If you are getting a new car, a brilliant "Super" Caronize finish may increase your trade-in value \$100 and more.

Guaranteed
3 FULL YEARS

The only wipe-on enamel in America that gives you a 3-year WRITTEN guarantee against chipping, cracking or peeling when applied according to directions.

**16 CHOICE OF
BEAUTIFUL
NEW COLORS**

Black • Maroon • "Flory" (Bright)
Red • Cloud Grey • "Washington"
Dark Blue • Brewster (Dark) Green
Monticello (Light) Blue • Jewel
(Light) Green • Orange • "Lettuce"
(Very Light) Green • Light Yellow • Tan
Ivory • Chrome • Clear • White
"Super" Caronize White is absolutely non-yellowing

ONLY
\$2.95

Enough
to Paint
Almost
Any Auto

SEND NO MONEY

RUSH ORDER TODAY!

Use coupon below. Send us your color choice today! Pay postman only \$2.95 plus postage. Or send cash and we pay postage.

Fill Out and Mail This Coupon Today! Send No Money!

Please send me qts. of
"Super" Caronize at \$2.95 per qt.

COLORS:

NAME
(Please Print)

ADDRESS

CITY STATE

Send Postpaid,
remittance enclosed

Send C. O. D.
plus postal charges

AMAZING FOR AUTOS and
1001 OTHER PAINT USES

AT HOME

Caronize colors are wonderful for all refrigerators, gas stoves, furniture. All porcelain, metal and wood surfaces. "Super" Caronize Clear gives a durable coating to floors, linoleum and all household woodwork.



OUTDOORS

Perfect for all lawn furniture, swings, bird-baths and other items of this type. Also recommended for boats, canoes, etc.



ON THE FARM

Durable for tractors and all other kinds of farm implements, dairy and utensil uses.



STORES AND OFFICES

Excellent for desks, table tops, files and 1001 other uses in stores, shops, taverns, beauty parlors, offices, etc.



CARONIZE, INC.

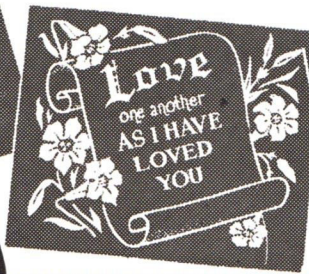
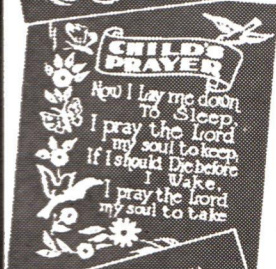
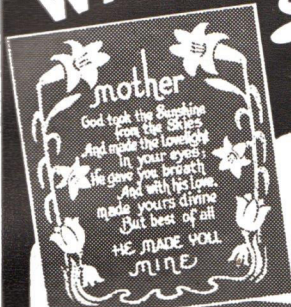
Dept.
PP12

1801 Singleton Ave.
St. Louis 3, Mo.

AGENTS & DISTRIBUTORS
Write for Free Information Today

DO YOU WANT SPENDING MONEY?

Sell these popular Patriotic and Religious Mottoes



SEND US NO MONEY IN ADVANCE

Just write and ask us to send you an assortment of 40 beautiful glittering patriotic and religious mottoes which the public like so well. Sell them easily and quickly to your friends and neighbors for only 35c each. At the end of 14 days send back, if you wish, all mottoes you have not sold, and send us only 25c for each you have sold. You keep all the rest of the money

IF YOU SELL 25, YOU KEEP \$2.50

IF YOU SELL 30, YOU KEEP \$3.00

IF YOU SELL ALL 40 YOU KEEP \$4.00

REMEMBER: No money is needed in advance. You take no risks. You can return all the mottoes you do not sell. You do not pay shipping costs or split your commission. You keep all the profit on each sale.

STEPHENS CREDIT SALES

406 North Main Street P. O. Box 106 Normal, Illinois

Dept. PF 79



"Moritza," Black Belgian Shepherd, shown in New York town house of her famous owner, star of stage and screen, Basil Rathbone.

"Another Basil Rathbone hit . . . he's switched to Calvert!"

Everywhere folks are taking the cue and switching to Calvert Reserve—because they've found they prefer Calvert's lighter, smoother, mellower taste. Credit *that* to Calvert's greater blending experience!

Try Calvert Reserve tonight, yourself. We predict you'll switch, too!



Choice Blended Whiskey—86.8 Proof—65% Grain Neutral Spirits . . . Calvert Distillers Corp., New York City