

THE TOP SELLING BRITISH CRIME MAGAZINE

Edgar Wallace

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

MICHAEL ARLEN

PLUS FIVE NEW STORIES

and (unpublished)

EDGAR WALLACE

Girl Who Won at Epsom

and (exclusive)

COLIN WILSON

The Mind of Ian Brady

May, 1967

No. 34 Vol. 4

The logo features the name "Edgar Wallace" in a cursive script, with a red circle superimposed over the letter "O". A horizontal line is drawn beneath the signature.

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EDGAR WALLACE

Mystery Magazine

Vol. IV No. 34

May, 1967

Mystery, Crime, and Detection for the Aficionado

CONTENTS

STORIES

The Girl Who Won at Epsom	EDGAR WALLACE	3
This You Will Remember	CLAYTON MATTHEWS	12
He Got What She Wanted	NIGEL MORLAND	24
The Martinet	CHARLOTTE MACLEOD	38
Return from Captivity	THOMASINA WEBER	42
The Subtle Death	CHRISTOPHER CURTIS	71
You Only Live Once	MICHAEL ARLEN	75
Message for Short-Time Lew	ERIC PARR	91
The Heiress (<i>period piece</i>)	WILLIAM MAXWELL	96
<i>Coup de Bartram</i>	PETER WALLACE	113

FEATURES

<i>Editorial: Briefly</i>		2
<i>Relaxation: Crossword No. 24</i>		23
<i>Caricature: Patricia Highsmith</i>	RALPH SALLON	54
<i>Crime: The Mind of Ian Brady</i>	COLIN WILSON	56
<i>Reviews: New Books</i>	JOHN DE SOLA	119
<i>Letters: Readers Say . . .</i>		127

Cartoons by MACIEK

Edgar Wallace Mystery Magazine is published on the 1st of each month by Edgar Wallace Magazines Ltd. All characters in these stories are entirely fictitious and in no way refer to any person, living or dead. Printed by The Rugby Advertiser Ltd., Albert Street, Rugby. News-vending Trade Distribution by The Rolls House Publishing Co. Ltd., Rolls House, 2, Breams Buildings, London E.C.4. Sole agents, Australia: Gordon and Gotch (A'sia) Ltd.; New Zealand: Gordon and Gotch (N.Z.) Ltd.; South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.; © 1967 Edgar Wallace Magazines, Ltd., 4, Bradmore Road, Oxford. NIGEL MORLAND, Editor

NOTHING DIED more slowly and with such apparent reluctance as the fictional legend of the dumb cop.

The word 'dumb' can be made to serve a great many purposes—silent; stupid; slow; stodgy; conservative; obstinate . . . you name it and, most likely, 'dumb' has it. In this case it is offered as a many-sided generic to cover the sort of copper who moved flat-footed

Briefly

through many crime novels in the last quarter of the 19th century to well into the first quarter of the 20th, the dumb cop who hedged, blocked, stopped or argued, or whatever, while the brilliant young private eye ran graceful circles round Scotland Yard, or its provincial brothers, and solved everything quicker than the twinkling of the other well known eye.

Poor old heavy-handed Lestrade really brought the spotlight on the routine and made the dumb cop into an almost essential part of the ratiocinative scenery. Lestrade may have had his moments, but he was dimmed blazing erudition of Mr. Holmes.

There have been crime novels in which policemen of unbelievable stupidity have featured—and novels where they have been part of the villainy, as in such classic examples as *The Greek Coffin Mystery: Buried for Pleasure; Hercule Poirot's Christmas*, and others. The private eye occasionally has doubled as a villain since that first remarkable effort, *The Crimson Circle*.

But all in all the police did have a hard time until the trend to make them human began, and was spearheaded for aficionados when Edgar Wallace, who never subscribed to the dumb cop notion, made serving officers his heroes, popularising, redrawing and streamlining them, beginning with *Angel Esquire* (in 1908, the year policemen broke the Lestrade image). And apart from gruff old Elk, and others, he combined the best of both worlds in the unforgettable Mr. J. G. Reeder.

Ellery Queen also made use of both worlds with a private eye whose father was a serving officer; John Creasey's Gideon is perhaps the apex of the real fictional cop type.

But now Scotland Yard has moved there are snags. The villains might cringe when Gideon of Scotland Yard sails in, but what happens when 'Gideon of 10, Broadway' is announced?

The Editor.

Edgar Wallace

*The gentle
Tressa
again, as
part of a
light and gay
adventure
about the
world EW
loved*

.....

The Girl Who Won at Epsom

WHEN ALICIA PENTON entered the chaste establishment of Max Brabazin in Holland Park Gardens, she did so after consultation with Tressa.

"Uncle is wholly impossible, and I wouldn't stay at Penton Court, not if I were the heiress to millions—which, as a matter of fact, my dear Tressa, I'm not."

"You're rather young to be a governess," murmured Tressa who, knowing all the circumstances, could not honestly advise her against the step. "And besides, Ralph really isn't too bad."

"Uncle Ralph is a smug," said Alicia hotly. "He hates everything I like and the other day he turned out a gardener who had worked for him for twenty years because he had a bet on the Lincolnshire Handicap! And when I told him I had a bet on every big race, he nearly threw a fit. He said that people who betted were either thieves or fools; they were people who were trying to get money for nothing. He said that cupidity and stupidity were the basis of all gambling, and then he said some horrible things about father—poor daddy did rather overrun the constable, as we know, but there's no reason why his own brother should sneer about his slow racehorses. But anyway, I'm going to this creature's perfectly awful house to teach. Brabazin and his wife are most impossible people, and the little boy has the manners of

a pig—”

“It looks as though you’re going to have quite a good time,” said Tressa. “Don’t you think it would be better if you stayed on at Penton Court and endured Ralph?”

Alicia shook her head.

“I can’t,” she said emphatically. “When he isn’t talking about the evils of betting, he’s talking about the excessive taxation which made him so poor that he’d have been obliged to leave Penton Court only, with his usual luck, somebody induced him to put five thousand pounds into an agency business—or at least he answered an advertisement or something of the sort—and he’s been drawing fat dividends ever since. No, Tressa, I’m going to earn my living. The only thing I ask of you is that, when I am fired, or I hit the oleaginous Mr. Brabazin over the head, you give me a bed for two or three nights, until I find something better.”

She shivered. “Penton Court is a palace of gloom at any time, but at the present moment it is a palace of horror.”

Since Penton Court went Methodist, for reasons best known to itself, in the enthusiastic days of Wesley’s ministry, Penton Court had observed an attitude—no less—of personal conduct which may best be described as serious. Sir Ralph Penton had absorbed all the gloom religion had to impart, pictured hell in detail with the assurance of one who himself would never secure a closer inspection than the lofty crags of heaven afforded, revelled in the Book of Revelations, and found sheer joy in the Mysteries of Vessels which would be unsealed out of the Angel’s Trump. He spoke familiarly of the great and sacred figures of Christianity; was, so you might think from his diction, much in God’s confidence, moving his mind on even trivial matters.

Thus Sir Ralph knew positively that God did not like bridge at anything over 5d. a hundred. He did not approve of the Socialist Party, He abhorred strikes and the Sunday opening of cinemas. Aviation was directly contrary to the wisdom of providence; ‘For,’ said Sir Ralph with the emphasis of one who was enunciating an original theme, ‘if it had been intended that man should fly, God would have given him wings.’

This was too excellent an illustration to devote to one unnatural habit. Sir Ralph also remarked on many occasions that, if men had been intended to smoke, God would have given him a chimney-pot instead of a head.

In what manner the deity would have acted on any occasion, however trifling, was no secret to Sir Ralph, and rightly, for he

justified Voltaire's cynicism in that he had created God after his own image.

Sir Ralph was a tall man, broad of shoulder, bushy of beard. He stood well above six feet four. His conception of the saints, of apostles, of the big and bloodthirsty, holy figures of the Old Testament, was that they too were men of six feet odd, broad of shoulder, heavily bearded. He confessed that he had no desire to live contrary to their precepts and examples, and accordingly laid to their charge and upon them the responsibility for his own eccentricities of charity.

Twenty shillings in one pound—and not a penny more. His justice was depressing. He did that which was right in God's eyes, he said, and inferred that he shared vision with the Divinity.

He hated gambling, drinking, dancing and horse-racing, and found no hope of grace in the exponents of either vice.



Sir Ralph did not often come to the flat in Piccadilly Circus—it is a remarkable tribute to Tressa's catholicity of tastes and the wide range of her acquaintanceships that he came at all. Alicia Penton had been installed in the Brabazin homestead for two months when he called one afternoon, in time for tea, and had the good fortune to find Tressa alone. He grumbled over his cup at the high cost of living, at iniquitous taxations, at the extraordinary demands of agricultural workers: he complained bitterly of the Labour Government, and when he had finished, he asked gruffly:

“Have you any news of Alicia?”

“I believe she's very comfortable,” said Tressa. “I had a note from her the other day, saying that she was getting on well.”

Sir Ralph grunted.

“It was no wish of mine that she should be earning her living,” he said. “London to me is the very pit of the devil. It is filled with temptation for young and old. I find it difficult to walk along Piccadilly without meeting leering and wanton eyes—”

Tressa sighed wearily.

“My dear Ralph,” she said, with admirable patience, “are you in the category of those curiously archaic individuals who believe that Piccadilly is the haunt of vice, and Leicester Square the breeding place of sin? You are twenty years behind the times! I think you must have been reading books on the subject, and I rather guess the book is out of print and was bought from one of

the secondhand stalls. I have such a large circle of acquaintances that I can almost tell you the real haunts. Do you know that girls who are arrested in Leicester Square are taken to Bow Street and get a month, and that girls arrested in Lisle Street, which is just behind Leicester Square, go to Marlborough Street and are fined? In those circumstances do you imagine that Leicester Square would be filled with these undesirable creatures?"

"Happily, I know nothing about it," said Sir Ralph hastily, getting off a subject which he regarded as so delicate that it might not be discussed except in the clouded privacy of a smoking-room and a respectable smoking-room at that. "Anyway, London is horrible."

"London is beautiful," said Tressa calmly. "Have you walked through Hyde Park when the daffodils are out, or when the rhododendron bushes are in bloom? If you haven't, you've missed something. Or have you looked southward across the lake in Green Park? Or driven down Kingsway in the early hours of the morning?"

"I haven't," said Sir Ralph, and added: "I have no desire to. I'm worried about Alicia," he went on. "I fear that her father's vices are inherited by that unfortunate girl. Do you know that I discovered that she was making surreptitious bets on a horse race and, when I questioned her, she told me she always backed the horse in the Derby that ran fourth in the Guineas? Do you know that she won thirty pounds on an animal called Captain Kettle, or something of the sort?"

"She was lucky," said Tressa wistfully. "I backed the second!"

Sir Ralph made a little noise of disapproval.

"Is there a possibility of my seeing her?" he said at last. "I shall be up next Wednesday."

Tressa shook her head.

"I don't know," she said, "but I'll ask her to come."



It so happened that the invitation was unnecessary, for things were happening in Holland Park Gardens. One bright spring morning Mr. Brabazin pushed back his chair from the desk. Incidentally he also pushed himself back for, at the moment, he was occupying the chair.

This feat constituted no small exhibition of what Mr. Brabazin described as his 'latent strength'; he was on the wrong side of

sixteen stone. He was of middle height and hotly dressed. His purple tie, his claret socks and his russet shoes were all on the sultry side. His head was big and his hair well seccotined and brushed. As to his face, it was red and stout—he was one of those men who invariably perspire on the chin; his short, thick nose was retroussé and his sharp, dark eyes set close together under a somewhat blank and unnecessarily expansive forehead.

The 'den'—so described by him—in which he sat had been furnished by him 'to his taste'. These are the exact terms of his boast, so that the responsibility was all his. The carpet that covered the floor was an expensive Axminster, and the scheme of colour was comprehended in two shades of red, four of yellow, with a peacock blue motif. The furniture was dark red leather. The walls were covered with a red and gold paper, the mantelpiece was of dark mahogany, the desk of varnished pine and that, I think, is a fairly charitable description of the den in which Brabazin sat when he was not occupying an even more beautiful office in Cockspur Street.

Photographs of beautiful actresses adorned the walls—each signed hilariously, familiarly or coyly, according to the temperament or the contract of the signer. There were two telephones in the den, a large painting of Ormonde, and a weedy girl who wore glasses, was Mr. Brabazin's secretary, and was invariably addressed as 'Miss O.'

It is possible that she had another name, but in Mr. Brabazin's records there was no evidence of the fact.

"Miss O." snapped Max Brabazin.

The apologetic girl at the door clutched her notebook and pencil nervously and said in a pale voice:

"The young lady has come down, sir."

Mr. Brabazin nibbled the forefinger of his clenched hand in thought.

"Show her in, Miss O."

Mr. Brabazin settled back in his chair and waited the advent of 'the young lady' with that placid contentment which is the common property of gods and employers of labour who are about to discharge dispensable hands.

The door opened and Alicia came in. She was slim and pretty, plainly but neatly dressed, and she bore on her face that look of superiority which was very annoying to Mr. Brabazin.

"Well, Miss Penton," he said briskly, "so here you are! Will you sit down? I shan't keep you long."

He looked at his watch, for no valid reason, since the morning was all his and he had no appointments within the next hour. Possibly he wished her to appreciate the fact that he could give her any time at all.

The girl seated herself on the edge of one of the chairs which were ranged with geometrical precision all round the walls, and waited.

"You have been with us for six months," said Mr. Brabazin, "and I admit, Miss Penton, that I have nothing against you, your erudition or your general conduct. It grieves me to part with you, but the fact is, Miss Penton, my kid can't stand you any longer."

He added this with a frank and hearty smile, accompanied by the expressive out-throw of hands which was intended to neutralise the undoubted offensiveness of his remarks.

"I'm very sorry, Mr. Brabazin," said Alicia mildly, "but Willie has been rather trying."

"All children are trying," said Mr. Brabazin sententiously. "I was trying as a child, and probably you were too. Boys will be boys."

"Some boys can be little fiends, Mr. Brabazin," said the girl, and Brabazin raised a pained and arresting hand.

"I will hear no word against my child," he said, and his voice rose to a bellow. "Not a word, I tell you—you're simply the wrong kind of governess, and my wife says—however, we won't quarrel."

"I hope we won't," said Alicia. "But on the whole, I prefer you more in a quarrelsome mood than in those tender moments when you have invited me to spend my evening out with you at a little Soho restaurant."

Mr. Brabazin's neck went red, but before he could frame an indignant retort, she went on:

"Certainly I have no quarrel with your child, who merely inherits the peculiar qualities of his parent," she said outrageously. "Most of the bookmakers I have known have been gentlemen."

Mr. Brabazin was apoplectic with anger. He could pass over the charge of not being a gentleman, but that his calling could be so vulgarly described was beyond forgiveness.

"Let me tell you, miss," he spluttered, "that when you call me a bookmaker you are going a bit too far. I am connected with an eminent firm of commission agents, I admit, but that is neither here nor there. We lay and we pay. Nobody can ever raise the finger of scorn"—here he became incoherent, thrust a cheque

towards her, and pointed to the door. "You are an ill-mannered young woman," he said, "and if you apply to me for a reference—"

"Is it likely?" said the scornful Alicia and, going upstairs, superintended the removal of her trunk.

"I'm fired," she announced as she came into Tressa's bedroom. "And oh, Tressa, I'm a Christian martyr! What I've endured! I'm going to stay a week with you, and I'll be able to go to the theatre, and could you, like an angel, persuade the Olivers to let me have a seat in their box at Epsom? I'm told Greek Bachelor is a certainty for the City and Suburban!"

Tressa took off her horn-rimmed glasses—she had been reading when the interruption came.

"I'm afraid there's one drawback to staying here: you can't very well miss seeing your admirable relative. He's calling this afternoon."

Alicia's face fell.

"Uncle Ralph?" she asked.

Tressa nodded.

"He's very anxious for you to go back to Penton Court."

"I will do many things, but not that," said the girl. "I'll let him take me to dinner at the Savoy—I'll even let him take me to see a play. But go back to Penton Court I won't!"

This was the spirit which Sir Ralph encountered when he called in the afternoon. He listened, his tight lips set, his virtuous eyes half-closed, his immaculate finger-tips touching. When she finished a little breathlessly:

"Alicia, I will put the matter to you plainly," he said. "I am, as you know, childless, and you are my sole relative. Penton Court will be yours, and an income, largely curtailed by the wretched and inefficient government and reaching almost the vanishing point under the present abominable administration. Providing you return and take your place in county society, and promise never again to indulge in the pernicious practices which—er—marred our relationships. Quite by accident, I met Sir Bertram Oliver at my club, and was appalled to learn that you intended going to a race meeting on Wednesday, that you had, in fact, begged a place in his box. That, of course, I cannot allow."

"My dear Uncle Ralph"—her tone was calm and decisive—"I am going to Epsom on Wednesday and I am going to win a lot of money."

"Ridiculous!" snorted Sir Ralph, and a light gleamed in the girl's eyes.

"If you think I am going to back the favourite, I agree it is ridiculous to take seven to four about a horse that may not get more than a mile at racing pace. I've been talking to Johnnie Boulter, who's got a stable of horses at Newmarket, and he says that he's never known a Phalaris that could stay more than a mile. Now Greek Bachelor—"

"Greek grandmothers!" snapped Sir Ralph. "Now listen to me, Alicia! Whether you win or lose at Epsom—"

"I shall win," murmured his niece.

"Whether you win or lose at Epsom is wholly immaterial. I happily, shall neither win or lose. If you insist on working for your living, I will find you an opportunity. As you know, I have a large interest in the firm of Elvert, Card, Rice & Co., and I'll endeavour to secure a position for you, providing you agree to drop your ridiculous gambling—"

Alicia was staring at him.

"Uncle, do you ever bet?" she asked.

"Certainly not," he replied scornfully. "You know I don't. If I won or lost money by racing, I should certainly not be such a hypocrite as to object to your indulging in that disgraceful practice!"

Solemnly she put out her hand and grasped his warmly.

"Thank you" she said.



Epsom Downs, with its banners, its mass movement, its roaring rings and queer air of unreality, was in a condition of hectic excitement when Alicia slipped out of the box and made her way down to the crowded Tattersall's ring. The crowd here was thick, for the runners in the City and Suburban were on their way to the post, and it was with some difficulty that she sidled up to a tall, saturnine man, who stood silently by the rails, a small betting book in his hand. He recognised her almost at once and lifted his hat.

"Good afternoon, Miss Penton," he said, "I hear you've left the governor?"

She nodded.

"I want to have a bet," she said, and he frowned.

"I didn't know you went in for that sort of thing, miss," he said. "What do you want to back?"

"Can you tell me a horse that can't possibly win?"

He frowned at her again.

"Yes, I can tell you that," he said, and named an outsider.

"I want ten pounds on that, please."

"But you'll lose your money."

"I want to lose my money, Mr. Rice. You *are* the senior partner of your firm, aren't you?"

The bookmaker shook his head.

"No, Miss Penton, the senior partner is Brabazin. We still keep the name of Elvert, Card, Rice & Co., for old associations' sake. Besides it is much more respectable. Very few people know that we are bookmakers at all. As a matter of fact, we'd have been out of business a few years ago, we had such a bad time, only Mr. Card managed to raise a little capital from some gentleman in the country, which put us on our feet. Brabazin must have told you that?"

He took her ten pounds and put it in his pocket.

"You'll lose," he warned her.

She shook her head.

"Whatever happens, I shall win," said Alicia Penton.



She telephoned Penton Court that night and explained to the agonized Sir Ralph the exact character of the firm he had been financing.

"And didn't you know that a commission agent is a bookmaker?" she asked sweetly. "Poor dear! And to think that all these years you have been drawing dividends from poor, deluded punters! What will you do, uncle—will you send the money back?"

"I must consider my position," said Sir Ralph shakily.

"Will you consider mine?" she asked, in the same dulcet tone. "You said if you won money over the City and Suburban you'd change your point of view. Well, you've won ten pounds of mine!"

When Alicia went back to Penton Court, the subject of Sir Ralph's investment was tacitly avoided. Until, one day, going into the study, she found him reading *The Sporting Life*, which he hastily concealed under his chair. And when, later that day, he asked her casually which was the best of the Aga Khan's three, she knew that the largest shareholder in the firm of Elvert, Card, Rice & Co., had not severed his connection with the firm.

THIS YOU WILL REMEMBER

CLAYTON MATTHEWS

ONCE MAGGIE WARD heard something, was told something or read something, she could recall it verbatim, including punctuation, with a snap of her fingers.

Some wag had once remarked that Maggie had a pornographic mind and Maggie, when people marvelled at her total recall, said yes, she had a pornographic mind, and could never understand why they laughed so hard.

If some party smartie tried to explain the difference between pornographic and photographic, Maggie would only stare in utter bafflement. Unbelievable? Not if you knew Maggie. Maggie was the original innocent. Not that she was without sin in the world's meaning of the word. Yet any sins she committed were committed in all innocence.

Maggie had never seen *Born Yesterday*, either on the stage or the movie version, and so she didn't identify with Billie Dawn when John D. called her a dumb broad.

Maggie saw John D. Thornton for the first time in the lobby of a downtown hotel; she was running the cigar stand. There was a crush of people around the stand. John D. elbowed his way through, bought a dollar cigar, gave Maggie a five dollar bill and walked away without waiting for his change. Ten minutes later he pushed his way up to the counter again.

"Miss . . . I just gave you a five for this cigar and forgot to wait for my change."

"Yes, sir," Maggie said cheerfully. "You walked right off before I could make change. The serial number of your five is . . ." Maggie closed her eyes briefly, snapped her fingers and reeled off the number of the bill. Then she punched the register and handed him a five dollar bill. "That *is* your bill, sir?"

"Well, yeah, I guess so." He blinked down at it.

"Then if you'll return it to me, sir, I'll make the correct change. Your cigar was one dollar."

John D. started to return the bill, then stopped. "Wait! Can

you do that every time?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I memorise the serial number so I can identify the bill. Some people give me a five, then return and claim it was a ten. You'd be surprised at how they back down if I can remember the serial number."

With John D. holding the bill so she couldn't see it, Maggie again gave him the right number. John D. relinquished the bill and accepted his change. He was the only one at the counter now. He lit his cigar, eyeing her thoughtfully. "That's quite a trick."

She was aware that he was studying her intently and was quite sure his interest was piqued only by her trick memory. In this she did herself an injustice. She was young, in good health, had thick brown hair, solemn blue eyes, a soft and generous mouth, and her figure was more than adequate. But she didn't know how to buy, and wear, clothes that showed her figure to an advantage. Her air was usually tousled, a lock or two escaping down over her eyes, and her use of make-up was, to be charitable, far from skilful.

In John D. Maggie saw a man close to forty, expensively groomed, with an olive complexion, black hair and dark eyes as expressionless as buttons. There was an assurance about him, an air of command, the scent of money.

So when he enquired as to what time she got off and then asked her out to dinner, Maggie accepted, not jumping at it but accepting without coy posturings. She didn't receive that many dinner invitations.



He took her to an expensive restaurant. There were people waiting to be seated. John D. didn't have to wait. He was greeted with a smile just short of obsequious, and he and Maggie were ushered to a quiet corner booth without his name being once mentioned. John D. ordered the drinks and dinner without consulting Maggie, a double bourbon for himself, a martini for Maggie, and two medium cooked steaks. Maggie didn't mind in the least; the men she usually went out with either ordered the cheapest items on the menu or took her to a place where there were no expensive items.

When their drinks were served, John D. said abruptly, "What're you doing, working behind a cigar counter?"

It was something like the ancient question, "What's a nice girl

like you doing working in a place like this?" But Maggie didn't mind that, either. It expressed a curiosity she had learned to expect.

She said, " You mean my trick memory? What good is it, except on a stage somewhere in a freak act? I mean, with an education and some sort of training, okay. I don't happen to have either."

This led, naturally, into the short and uninteresting story of her life, which she told with very little prompting from John D., and she made it last through dinner. She figured he was entitled to that at least for the dinner and the drinks. Whatever other compensation he expected, or demanded, he wasn't going to get, certainly not on such short acquaintance.

Somewhat to her astonishment, he demanded nothing else. In the taxi he didn't make the first pass, didn't even try to kiss her.

He did propose a game of car licence number poker for a dime a hand. "Just to make it interesting," he said.

After three hands he suddenly asked Maggie to repeat her first licence number. She snapped her fingers and gave it to him. John D. nodded seriously. Four cars and four licence plates later, he asked her for *his* first licence number. Maggie plucked it from her memory.

He nodded, evidently pleased, and said, "Let's knock it off, huh? It's a game for punks."

They were a few blocks from her apartment house by then. John D. asked for her phone number, and Maggie gave it to him. He wrote it carefully in a small black notebook. The taxi pulled up to the curb. John D. leaned across to open the door for her and said, "I'll call you."

Maggie got out, and the cab pulled away with a jerk, leaving her staring after it. She wondered what kind of a kook this guy was. Not that it mattered too much, since she likely would never see him again. She turned away with a shrug and went inside.

But she did see him again. A week later he came up to the stand just as Maggie was getting off work and offered to buy her a cup of coffee. In a quiet corner of the coffee shop, she learned what it was all about.

"You know what's rough on a bookie?" he began without preamble. "Handling all those blasted betting slips! That's how you take a fall. The cops chop down the doors before you can get rid of the slips and there's all the evidence they need. No slips, no case." He took a sip of his coffee and lit a cigar. "I once knew

a guy who had a memory like yours. Never wrote a thing down. He didn't even keep a set of account books for the cops to find. Kept everything in his head. And that's where you come in, Maggie."

"I do? Where do I come in?"

"You go to work for me. I'll pay you ten times what you make at that smoke counter."

"But what do I do?"

"A bet comes in, it's recorded in that computer memory of yours. And I'll use your head instead of a set of books. Nothing on paper, see?"

Maggie didn't quite see, but she kept silent as he went on to enumerate the advantages of working for him: sharing his suite in a Hollywood hotel, all the clothes she wanted, all the spending money she desired, trips to Vegas, and such.

Maggie was dazzled. What more could a girl wish for? The best she had ever hoped for was to marry some nine-to-five guy and settle down to an apron and baby-napkin existence.

She accepted his proposition, and John D. granted her one of his rare smiles. He walked with her out of the hotel and strode out into the street, ignoring the whizzing traffic, and whistled a cab into the curb. He ushered Maggie inside and gave the driver more than enough money to get Maggie home.



And so her new life began. It was a luxurious existence, compared to what she had known. The hotel wasn't a Ritz, but it had a number of nice suites, one of which John D. occupied. Maggie's bedroom alone was nearly as large as her former apartment. And John D. wasn't stingy; he opened charge accounts for her in several department stores, and Maggie garbed herself in new clothes. John D. didn't own a car, but he had to be one of Yellow Cab's best customers. He bought a couple of hundred dollars worth of cab vouchers a month and let Maggie use all she wanted.

Maggie's day started early, a couple of hours before the Eastern tracks opened and continued up until the first race at whatever Coast track was operating that day. Then she was on her own until late afternoon when the winners started calling in. Evenings they went out to dinner, a show or a Hollywood party. John D. was a pet of the Hollywood crowd. No party was thought com-

plete without an underworld figure present and John D., who looked more like a Hollywood producer, than a Hollywood producer, fitted right in. And his appeal was heightened with his acquisition of Maggie. Her memory was good for parlour tricks, and John D. took great delight in having her perform.

Maggie had been curious from the beginning as to why he insisted on being called John D., but some instinct had warned her not to ask. One evening her curiosity was satisfied when a drunken actor asked belligerently, 'John D.? What kind of a name is that? What's the D stand for? John Dillinger?'

John D. glowered at him. "I don't know any John Dillinger. All I know is John D. Rockefeller. What's good enough for a Rockefeller is good enough for me."

Maggie thought it fortunate those within hearing had the good sense not to laugh.

For the first two months Maggie was caught up in the excitement of her new job. But boredom soon set in. The names of horses and the sums bet flowing in and out of her brain had a narcotic effect. The constant ringing of the telephones in the suite began to grate on her nerves like sandpaper. She was glad to escape for the few hours every afternoon. Yet the thrill of being able to buy all the clothes she wished soon palled. She had never cared for movies, and she wasn't much of a reader. She was hard put to fill those empty hours in the afternoon. Having worked all day, five days a week, all her adult life, she had vague feelings of guilt about being free afternoons. A few times she hung around the suite, but John D. had nothing for her to do when he didn't have information to feed into her memory. She got in his way, and he snarled at her, driving her out.

There was a small bar off the hotel lobby, uncrowded in the afternoons. Maggie wasn't a heavy drinker, but she did have an amazing capacity, and a few drinks blurred the edges of her boredom.

The bar was where she met Hank.

Henry Fairchild was slender, wiry, with deft quick hands, cynical grey eyes, and a soft voice. He was about the same age as John D.

The second afternoon she was in the bar, Maggie introduced herself and told him she lived at the hotel.

The next afternoon she put on a tight pink dress with ruffles around the bottom and wore a floppy hat, the front brim of which kept dropping down to obscure her vision.

Hank brought Maggie her drink and said in his soft voice, "That hat won't do, Maggie."

"It won't?" She was truly astonished.

"Too big, too show-offish."

She waited until he had turned away before removing the hat. She fluffed her hair nervously. When he came back down the bar a little later, not by so much as a word or a gesture did he indicate approval, but somehow she knew he did approve.

When she got up to leave, Hank leaned across the bar. "That dress won't do, either, Maggie."

"No?"

"Too gaudy. Too many frills. You look like Mae West in her prime."

"And that's bad?"

"Keep it simple, Maggie. Never forget that."

Maggie didn't go into the bar the next afternoon. She went shopping instead and bought a very simple dress, simple as only the most expensive garment can be. And she stopped in at a beauty parlour and had something done to her hair.

The following afternoon Hank nodded gravely, leaning on the bar. "That's it, Maggie. Not a thing wrong with that dress."

There was one thing wrong with it: John D. was paying for it. And Maggie knew such a thought would never have crossed her mind a couple of days ago.

She hadn't told Hank about John D.. How could she? She knew it would destroy whatever was building between them. She wasn't at all sure what it was, but she wished she could hold it cupped in her hands as something very precious, very fragile.



One night Hank asked her out to dinner. Maggie had to lie to John D., telling him she was spending an evening with an old girl friend. John D. seemed to accept the lie at face value, even saying, "That's okay, babe. Run along and have a good time. We've been sticking too close together anyway. We're getting like an old married couple and that won't do."

Hank took her to a small, unpretentious restaurant. Even there they had to wait. Maggie didn't mind; she was as happy as she'd ever been in her life. Over their drinks Hank asked Maggie about herself. She had a story ready: she hated lying to him, but she saw no alternative. Actually it wasn't too fabricated; she just

failed to mention John D. and her trick memory. She'd made up her mind Hank would never find out about either. In fact, she had made it a point to appear forgetful in Hank's presence.

And that was when she realised she was in love with Hank.

"Nothing interesting about my life, as you can see," she finished. "Dull as dishwater."

Hank shrugged. "My biography wouldn't win any Pulitzer prize, either. I was old enough to put in two years Army time at the tail end of the Second World War. I didn't shoot at a single enemy. To the best of my knowledge, none shot at me. Since then I've done this and that and a couple of other things. I found out I had a fair talent for mixing the booze. The last few years I've had my eye on a sauce dispenser of my own and have been putting away what I could toward that end."

If Maggie had been less than the innocent she was, she would have recognized the warning implicit in his last words. Hank wasn't ready for matrimony or any such financial drag. It wouldn't have mattered to Maggie even if she had understood; in her blissful state he could have been Jack the Ripper.

Hank managed to change over to a night shift, leaving him free afternoons until six.

And so Maggie was no longer bored afternoons. Hank's small apartment made an excellent rendezvous. One afternoon Maggie summed it all up by saying, "Darling, I never knew. I never knew!"

"That, I take it, means you're happy?"

"I'm happy. You can believe it!"

"Then whatever happens, Maggie," he said, grey eyes for once without cynicism, "don't ever forget that."

But John D. wasn't happy. He wasn't at all happy.

For Maggie, dreaming of Hank, would forget one minute what had happened the preceding one. Bettor's names and sums bet fed into her brain came out scrambled. She was like a juggler who, capable of keeping an incredible number of Indian clubs in the air at the same time, suddenly takes to dreaming, lets them come crashing down around his head and couldn't care less.

John D. snarled at her to no avail. But when she mixed up a two-dollar bettor's wager on a small-price favourite with that of a hundred dollar bet on a high-odds long-shot that came in, John D. flipped. The two-dollar bettor was not only happy with his unexpected good fortune but used it to finance a trip to parts unknown before John D. got wise. Maggie's lapse of memory

cost John D. a mint. When he came down off the walls, he flew at her in a rage.

Maggie recently returned from a visit to Hank's apartment, remained serene throughout. When John D. ran out of invective, she said, "I'm sorry, John D. I'll try to do better."

"You'll try to . . .!" He squinted at her in sudden awareness, as though he hadn't really looked closely at her in some time.

For the next few days John D. didn't once raise his voice to Maggie, not even when she made another costly mistake. Maggie noticed his abrupt change of attitude, of course, but she didn't give it a second thought.

One afternoon, over a week later, Maggie let herself into Hank's apartment with the key he'd given her and found him gone. It was the first time that had ever happened. Thinking he had probably stepped out on an errand and would be right back, she sat down to wait.

Three hours later she was still waiting and nearly out of her mind. She knew of no one to call. Hank had never told her of any friends or relatives. Finally, at a quarter to six, she left the apartment and took a cab back to the hotel. It was after six, long past the beginning of Hank's shift, when she walked into the cocktail lounge.

Hank wasn't there. A strange bartender was behind the bar.

Maggie asked, "Where's Hank?"

The bartender looked blank. "Hank? Oh . . . You mean the regular guy." He shrugged. "Search me. The union sent me over to fill in."

"He didn't call in or anything?"

"Not the way it was handed to me. The boss here's fit to be tied."

"But Hank doesn't do things that way!"

"It happens to the best of us now and again, lady."

Behind Maggie, John D. said, "Have a good time shopping today, babe?"

Maggie whirled, her breath catching. How much had he heard? His face was bland, the dark eyes as unreadable as ever. He swayed a little on his feet, and his breath was strong with whisky.

Maggie managed, "I didn't go shopping today, John D. I took in a movie."

"Saving me money, huh? Good girl!" He chuckled. "I took off early tonight. Thought we might make a night of it. Dinner, dancing, the whole bit. You've been working too hard lately, and

I guess I've been a little rough on you, expecting too much."

The last thing in Maggie's mind was dinner and dancing. She wanted to search for Hank; naturally she couldn't tell John D. that. And where could she look?

She went along, a numbing cold spreading through her.

They went to the same restaurant where John D. had taken her that first night. John D. was unusually chatty. Maggie, her brain a squirrel cage, didn't hear a word he said.

They were on their second drink when a tall, thin, middle-aged man, with cold blue eyes and wearing a grey suit, slipped into the booth.

John D. stiffened, face emptying of its recent animation.

The intruder said, "Hello, John. It's been awhile."

A part of Maggie's attention was captured; it was the first time she'd heard anyone call John D. plain John.

John D. said, "Sergeant, do you know Maggie Ward?"

"We haven't met, but I've heard of Miss Ward." The man in grey politely inclined his head.

"This is Sergeant Barlow, Maggie, of Los Angeles Homicide."

The word rang a warning bell far back in Maggie's mind, but she was still too concerned about Hank to react immediately.

"John," Sergeant Barlow said, "you know the Loser?"

John D. chuckled. "In my business, Sergeant, I know a lot of losers. Otherwise, I wouldn't be in business long."

"The Loser is a Syndicate man. Have gun, will travel. When a Syndicate member wants somebody eliminated, the Loser's sent in. He's a specialist at losing people. Hence, the name."

"Losing people? The Syndicate?" John D. said blandly. "Now you've lost me, Sergeant."

"The Loser's been in town for a couple of days. We didn't find out until too late. He jetted out this afternoon. We have a pickup out on him now. We suspect he had a contract. You see, he slipped up a little this time. Usually his victims aren't found for days, weeks, months. But we found this one about the time the Loser was leaving town, found him draped around a tree half-way down a mountain up Laurel Canyon. The victim . . ."

Sergeant Barlow transferred his gaze to Maggie. "One Henry Fairchild, throat sliced from ear to ear. The way I get it, the Loser's good with a knife."

Maggie could have sworn she screamed aloud. Apparently she had not, for nothing changed in Sergeant Barlow's narrow face.

John D. said, "I don't know any Henry Fairchild."

“He was the bartender at the lounge in your hotel.”

John D. shrugged. “So? I’ve been in there a few times for a belt. That doesn’t mean I know the barkeep’s name. And even if I did, I still don’t see the connection.”

“Since identifying the victim, we’ve poked around, asking questions. It seems others have been poking around as well, asking questions of Fairchild’s neighbours this past week. Questions about a woman visiting Fairchild in his apartment.”

“I *still* don’t see what that has to do with me!”

“It has this to do with you,” Sergeant Barlow said softly. “If we can tie the Loser in with this, I have a hunch it’ll lead right back to you. The Department has been after you for a long time, John. So far you’ve always managed to squirm out from under. This time I think we’ll nail you.”

John D.’s laughter grated. “That’ll be the day, cop!”

“That will indeed be the day.” Sergeant Barlow stood up, then leaned on the table on his knuckles. “I suppose you’re wondering why I’m telling you all this? I’m hoping you’ll run like the rat you are. That’ll be all I need for an excuse to pull you in!”

As Sergeant Barlow moved away, John D. muttered, “Dumb cop! If he thinks he can spook me into running!”

Without looking at him Maggie said, “You had Hank killed. You found out about Hank and had him killed because I was in love with him!”

“In love!” John D. snorted. “You think I care about that? Flip for a dozen guys, you dumb broad, and see if I care. But he had that memory of yours on the blink, had you going around in a fog half the time. It was costing me dough!” He scooped his drink off the table, drained it in a gulp and slammed the glass down. “Let’s get out of here! I’ve all of a sudden lost my appetite!”

He got out of the booth and started off, weaving slightly. From force of habit Maggie followed him, her gaze clinging to his back.

Outside, John D. stood on the kerb looking both ways for a cab. The road was thick with traffic. The restaurant was located on a corner, a street branching off at an angle to a quiet, residential one. Now John D. spotted a cab, cruising lights burning, but it was in the centre lane of three lanes of forty-mile-an-hour traffic.

John D. waved both arms, shouting, “Hey! Cab! Over here!”

In his anxiety John D. stepped off the kerb and out into the street.

Maggie heard squealing tyres and instinctively glanced to her left.

An old car was lurching around the corner at high speed. The driver had ignored the stop sign and was trying to turn the car, desperately fighting the wheel for control. Maggie's gaze whipped back. John D. was directly in the path of the careering car, his back to it, still waving his arms at the cab which was already a half block up the street.

Maggie opened her mouth to shout a warning, then closed it without so much as a whisper escaping her.

The right front bumper of the car caught John D. in the small of the back, doubling him over the hood as though on a torture rack and carrying him a few feet up the street before tossing him high and to one side. His scream was as shrill as a woman's. It seemed to take forever for him to fall to the pavement. Even from where she stood Maggie clearly heard the thudding sound his head made as it struck against the kerb.

The car weaved on for about a hundred feet before coming to a stop under the spill of light from a street lamp. Maggie saw everything clearly, even the rusty gouges on the bumper just above the licence plate. And she saw the white blur of the driver's face as he looked back. Then the car spurted away, turned the next corner and disappeared.

Maggie walked slowly over to where John D. lay and stood looking down at him. A crowd was already gathering. It seemed only seconds before she heard a siren wail. Then two uniformed officers were there, one kneeling beside John D., the other pushing the crowd back.

Dimly Maggie heard voices:

"He's still alive but barely. He'll never make it."

"Anybody get the licence number?"

"I saw the car, officer, but I wasn't close enough to—"

"This lady, officer. She was with him, and she saw the whole thing."

Maggie blinked, trying to focus her gaze, as she realized she was being spoken to. "Yes, Officer?"

"Did you see the car that hit him, miss?"

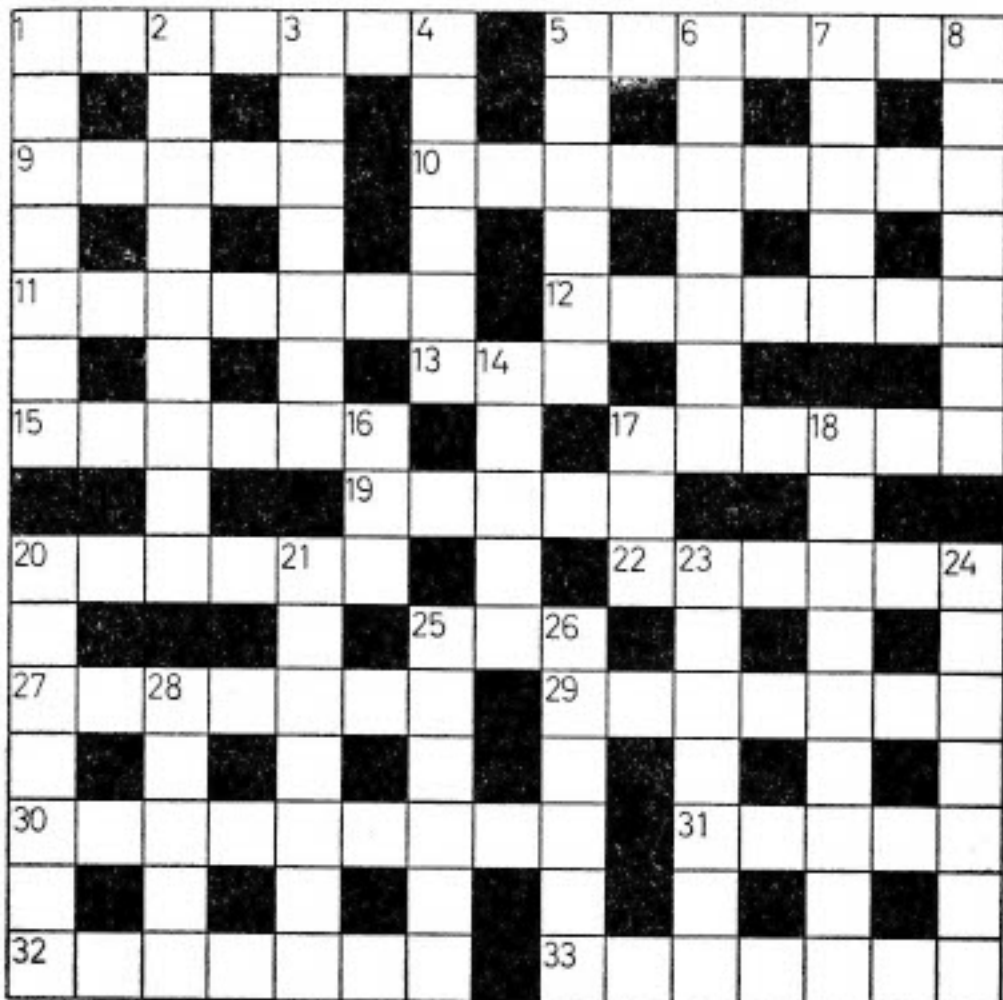
"The car? Oh, yes, I saw the car."

"Did you get the licence number?"

"The licence number?" Maggie looked again at John D. Was he still conscious enough to hear her? She hoped so. Absently she snapped her fingers. "I'm sorry, officer. I must have seen the licence number, but I can't remember it. I guess I just don't have a memory for things like that."

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EWMM Crossword No. 24



ACROSS

- 1 Goes the rounds (7)
 5 He may sound the alarm
 9 Was very tempting
 10 The opposite of 'tracks down' ?
 (7, 2)
 11 Technically a 'cooler' (7)
 12 Inspire with affection (7)
 13 Up to the present time (3)
 15 Row kicked up (6)
 17 Resting place for pigeons? (6)
 19 Make very happy (5)
 20 Twists the crooks? (6)
 22 Fellow with a beastly face? (6)
 25 Slippery customer (3)
 27 Taken—into custody? (7)
 29 Apprehends(7)
 30 In the way of one who will
 never be better? (9)
 31 Din one is disturbed by (5)
 32 Vital quality of French petrol
 (7)
 33 Takes ill (7)

DOWN

- 1 Maintains law and order (7)

- 2 Cause fear to increase finally?
 (9)
 3 Veteran who knows the ropes?
 (3, 4)
 4 There is this, we're told, in
 numbers (6)
 5 Guided missile! (6)
 6 It may be read to an unruly
 mob (4, 3)
 7 Not the hangman's noose (5)
 8 They follow the shooting (in the
 papers (too) (7)
 14 Manage to avoid arrest? (5)
 16 An agreeable word (3)
 17 How they put mailbags together
 (3)
 18 Fixed idea of a compulsive
 villain? (9)
 20 Prisoner (7)
 21 May be near the Persian capital
 (7)
 23 They are run by the boys (7)
 24 Keeps quiet—while the charge is
 read out? (7)
 25 Fit for human consumption? (6)
 26 Legal eagle? (6)
 28 Steals like the devil, Bob (5)

(Solution will appear in our June issue).

He Got What She Wanted

NIGEL MORLAND

This minor classic of a crime story has been reprinted many times in many lands since it was first published. EWMM offers it as perhaps new, and intriguing, to young readers

THE YEARS have passed at times like beads told by ancient fumbling fingers; in other moods I have seen those years race, tearing out of my uncertain grasp, leaving me with a sense of time laughing at me.

But Time in its flight has no pity, nor have the skies mercy. I have tried to flee my twin devils only to see them running at my side, pacing me with nonchalant disinterest, neither mocking nor savage, just there. They stay, impalpable, inflexible, constant, yet beyond reach as a man's shadow.

And when did it actually start? The first frail tendons of misery wrapped round me, unseen tentacles as tenuous as the first shoots of a malignant tumour which remains unknown . . . and triumphant on the day the surgeon's knife finds it, and is defeated by it. It grew round me like that, sheltering in my sense of shame, overwhelming me until I could do nothing, bringing with it a resurgent second devil, one I thought I had lost. A monstrous towering pair, the hunger and the thirst, the unfilled, the unslaked . . .

But autobiography is apt to run amok with a writer's sense of drama, for I am, indeed, a writer by trade: were I on my death-bed, as well I might be, my pen would record the moments as the self-experimental researcher notes his symptoms. Writing is surely

nothing but the tape recorder of its creator. He might hide, with thin furtiveness, behind the hedge of fiction, yet, nevertheless, all writing is merely the writer playing to the audience of himself, abject before the rowdy despot of the subconscious mind.

I write because I must, write as Dr. Jekyll might have written when Mr. Hyde was absent. But I have no doubts of my closeness to my Mr. Hyde. I am both a human being and the devil's cherished, indissolvably one in an unending oneness.

When I look round and see my friends, such as they are, and when I think on them I am lost in a sense of wonder. They see me as I see myself now in the mirror on the far side of this table at which I am writing.

Ordinary? Indeed so. A slightly built man of medium height; slim, rather feminine hands, small feet and good bones. My face is simply that, the epitome of John Doe: quiet blue eyes, dark hair and what the nice-minded call pleasing features. A man, a passable, civilised, modest man of perhaps forty. Obviously cleanly; obviously of good parentage and of good education. Those who attend to my wants call me 'sir' and I treat them fairly; head waiters are polite to me.

My friends see all that in me, too. 'Frank Damon?' so they would answer an enquiry, 'old Frank? Lord, yes, a nice chap. Quiet, you know. Good company over a drink and a useful man at bridge and tennis. Writes, you know'—here that inevitable apologetic English chuckle—'and good at political stuff. Thrillers as well.' Here the amused smiles. 'Never read the things myself, of course! But they must be good. He makes money.'

Old Frank, and I look in the mirror at old Frank, one invisible devil on each shoulder.

I always did like political science, but thrillers pay, not that I really need it. I use a pseudonym, John Laker Considine (carefully chosen, that—Carr, Chandler, Charteris, Cheyney, Christie; and Considine fits neatly in the middle on the shelves, picking up some reflected glory). You know my characters? Dr. Malobo? The Red Aces of Justice? Rafferty of Scotland Yard? Colourful stuff, wild, and perhaps melodramatic, but impervious to my devils.

John Laker Considine and his bright jackets. Poor old shadow! Piling up a wilderness of escapism for those who would flee themselves. And behind this veritable escapist stands his *alter ego*, the substantial presence of Frank Damon, old Frank, the nice chap who would give everything in his world, unto the

clothes he wears, to become John Laker Considine who dwells in his one-dimensioned, pseudonymous world.

Out of the windows of my gracious study I can look across my small garden, backing on this house my family left me, and becoming Hyde Park. On the other side, the front of the house, is the roar of Knightsbridge. A noble and valuable house, big for a solitary man, and one that I love.

However, I digress. With my ballpoint in my hand and my thoughts arrayed, my greater morbidities shrink back though they do not leave me entirely, even with the spring brightness of Hyde Park to delight my eyes.

Brightness in Nature in no way detracts from my devils. The one, the older one, I endured and continue to endure though its continuation shocked me; the second devil came on me a year after Dunkirk; it was the more awful of the pair. Fortunately it was in London in the chaos of war with bombs turning civic life to ruin. I was able to disappear, for money I had and I was able to buy oblivion and secrecy.

That second devil came on me so stealthily that I did not believe it at first; then I shrank back affrighted, crushed, nauseated. I had to bear it alone—and it is only now, thinking on it all, that I understand how the leper must feel.

My mother and father died before the Second World War broke out; they left me this house in which I have returned to live again, and they left me money. Writing I took up as a release from myself, and as a means to power without visibility—a purely morbid passion!

Yet I always require anonymity. That is easily found in London. The world and the people I knew before Dunkirk went with those same tides of war which washed smooth the sands of my acquaintance, enabling me to start again.

So, too, went Mary Damon. The world had no need to recall her at all, for those same tides had washed her away as well. But this little man must come enquiring. A troublesome little man, seemingly as harmless as a fly on the wall: brownish—hair, skin, eyes—and slight. Not young, and badly dressed, with fraying cuff edges and a dusty old hat, a man you could see with a cake and a glass of milk in a cheap restaurant, a man no one would ever notice, wholly a human zero except, perhaps, in his name—Arthur George Zink.

He was here last week, enquiring so mildly, blinking at me from behind his thick spectacles, affable, self-effacing, desiring not to

trouble me, enquiring for Mary Damon, apologising for bothering me, gentle, kindly Arthur George Zink—as weakly persistent as a dripping tap, so *damnably: politely, endlessly persistent!*

I see the tremendous juggernaut of bureaucracy hauled by regiments of Arthur George Zinks, little men at their eternal writing, making their entries, adding their sums, putting one and one together, until a total must emerge. And asking questions, unavoidable questions, persistently, persistently . . .



The inspector's glare was ferocious.

"You think that, sir?" He put both hands on the desk, leaning forward to tower over the plump amiability of Superintendent Leeds. "It's the fifth one—don't forget it."

Leeds beamed at Detective-Inspector Chater. Because they had become friends when they met as uniformed probationers on their two basic years, they usually forgot rank when alone.

"You're letting the thing infuriate you, Tom——"

Chater threw out his arms and sat down, placated by the use of his Christian name.

"Naturally I am a trifle distract." He glared. "Five kidnappings and five kids returned without a hair of their dear little heads being harmed, without a single mother screaming blue murder after the first knowledge of the thing——" Chater jerked a thumb to indicate all New Scotland Yard. "The pundits must be delighted."

"They are indeed." Leeds flapped his hands at the lean black Highland fury of his friend. "But I'm your super, old boy. Won't the mothers say a thing? You can tell me."

"Tush! Compounding, dammit! And do they care?" Chater sniffed. "Ach! And how can I move? I can't even prove they've paid or how much or where. Women!"

"Kids all right, I s'pose?"

"I've got my methods in finding out. Aye, they're bonny. Clean, well-fed, cared for, happy as Larry. I've known a few kidnappings but none like this."

"And why won't the mothers talk? What's behind it? Can't you get one of the Yanks to come across and help us? They're used to the snatch racket."

Leeds grimaced.

"Now, Tom. We're in a cleft stick, you know it. Nobody's

complained; at least the complaints've been withdrawn as soon as made. We can't prove anything, or even how the money passed——”

“There's such a thing as compounding——”

“Be quiet, Tom. It'd be a hellish charge to get across in court. Can you see the Attorney-General's face if he was asked to support a charge against a mother for compounding when her child had been kidnapped and she wanted it back?” Leeds leaned forward. “Tom, get the bastard, will you? Apart from everything else, it's a dirty business.”

Chater snorted irately.



But this is not work. I have the newest adventure of Dr. Malobar to finish, a matter of ten thousand words, yet I find essays at autobiography so fascinating, the ancient principle of confession being good for the soul!

It may be. It is also a minor antidote to devils. I am feeling clearer in mind, more comfortable. There is the Malobar manuscript to fetch. I am old-fashioned in that I write in longhand, for my mind constructs and perfects the next sentence while I am writing.

The folder of manuscript lives in the built-in cupboard in the bedroom, for no sensible reason.

When I opened the door and bent to pick up the folder, a wave of nostalgia swept over me. Not for months had it happened. Perhaps the spring air intensified the deep scent of gardenia, that well-remembered scent.

All carefully preserved, hanging there, the outer world of Mary Damon . . . there was the coral taffeta with the full skirt, the brown check suit—a costly article—bought in Bond Street, and the ivory satin cloak that had gone to all the best theatres in London. There was the fur coat—Persian lamb, a most expensive thing, costly, too, but I saw it as hateful, for only the other day I read of what happens to those small lambs . . . I touched garment after garment, each fashioned article had a memory, a story, an appeal, and each reached out to me, disturbing me, hurting—me, a man, a writer of bloodthirsty tales, John Laker Considine, no less!

But the requested *Danegeld* was paid in the coinage of uneasy recollection which memory demanded. I was a fool, a thrice

damned fool to keep these things here, a stupid danger in their way, yet I could do nothing, could not get rid of them any more than could a mother throw away the relics of a dead child.

Then it began worrying me again, that probing little man, that subtle and insinuating Zink. A wholly absurd name which comes dangerously close to Mary . . . God forbid that he can disinter her, yet in a most shocking sense, he can do that if he comes too close, and then?

These morbid thoughts did not help me. I thrust the pen at the paper, back again at my table, and thought of Dr. Malobar. 'The tall man with the dramatic green eyes seemed to tower over the whole room, a growing domination of terror.' There it stopped, a hiatus which remained.

It was no use trying; I could not write. That brownish little man of the frayed cuffs and the dusty hat would not leave my mind. Zink was such an absurd name, such a futile sound, yet it had the power to appall. I cannot bear the thought of my security, my routine, my world and my appetites being disturbed. I cannot bear what Zink might do.

All my ease has gone now, the morbidities which can possess me have returned and there is a feeling as if a hand has caught in my entrails and is twisting, a horrid feeling of impending doom.

I have been upstairs and all seems well there. The stairs are gaunt ones, still decorated by the family's choice of an ugly floral paper. The upper rooms are old-fashioned and solid; they were used by our maids but now they, like the rest of the house, are empty save the narrow room with bars where Mrs. Croucher, who was our cook, slept for twenty years.

The boy did not wake when I went in there. He seemed comfortable. I arranged his covers, tested his napkin but it did not need changing—I pride myself on a genius in these things which few men possess.

His brown eyes studied me when he momentarily awoke. His sudden whimpers were quietened; at ten months infants are easily soothed if expertly handled. This is a placid boy, with the chubby, well-rounded aspect of the naturally-fed child who has been capably weaned. Nadia Tarlyon, being a film star and a beautiful woman, probably employs good help: I shall be telephoning her shortly about her son.

The question of Zink requires pondering. If Zink will leave me alone, no harm will be done, but I doubt it. He will not stop.

His sort, narrowly persistent despite every obstacle, will continue with the single-mindedness of a bigot on a mission.

One cannot *kill* such a silly little man; to do so would only precipitate a deluge of Zinks, for his kind are as uncounted and numberless as ants, instantly subservient to the great god which rules them, the file of the case. What civil servant moves without a record to guide him?

The problem is, what I can say. Zink cannot be fobbed off. I recall every word of his last visit. 'But where *is* Mary Damon, sir?' 'She went abroad.' 'Indeed. May I have the date and place, please?' You see? Or it could be: 'She went away and never came back, Mr. Zink.' 'I *am* sorry, sir. Of course you went to the police and took steps . . .' God! Even this is denied. 'She was killed in the blitz, Mr. Zink. Not a trace of her left.' And he would say, 'Aow, how sad. But if you will just give me particulars I will be able to verify it, or perhaps trace some witness, and then I can close my files.' You see? Zink, Zink, Zink. He cannot be dodged or avoided. In his gentle, steady way he will uproot everything and would he keep quiet, then? I am not prepared to endure it.



Superintendent Leeds bounced his plumpness on the office chair as if he had been bitten.

"Nadia Tarlyon?"

Chater's lank blackness was involved in a twist of purely Highland cynicism.

"The beat, beat, beat of ten million adolescent hearts. Aye, the mother, when she isn't emoting at five thousand a week, of a kid of ten months. Julius Richard Stullux."

"Stullux?"

Chater made a wide gesture, leaning on the desk.

'Nadia was careless or something. That's her real name, Mavis Stullux, originally of Penter's Rents, Bankside, Bristol. I'm the only one who knows it. She's not married but the kid won't care, not if he gets all her money, and she's a saving body.'

"Tom, will you talk *sense*?"

"Yes, sir." Chater beamed. "Maggie Benning, who used to be in the typists' pool here, remember?"

"Maggie—yes. Little fair girl, wasn't she? Left for a better job, though she always wanted to be a policewoman, God love

the kid."

"Right. Left when Tarlyon wanted a secretary and picked her at the interview. Maggie likes the job and kept quiet when the Tarlyon kid vanished yesterday. But Tarlyon was rung by the kidnapper an hour ago, and Maggie's too good an ex-police stenographer to forget the rules."

Leeds jerked to his feet.

"A real break, Tom? No!"

"Aye. Our Maggie hasn't forgotten her old mates. She listened in on the extension when Tarlyon took the call. What she heard cheated her out of ten years' growth."

"Come on."

"Nadia Tarlyon balked at the terms, then accepted. This bastard picks them well, picks them beautifully. The ones who'll pay his price. His psychology is like something out of a book; he judges their capacity to pay to the last fraction. Ach!" Chater looked disgusted.

"Well, let's get busy. We'll be able to catch him."

"Mebbe. I don't know." Chater leaned over the desk again and whispered with the Celt's raw sense of drama.

Leed's eyes became more and more round. When he said, "Ker-ist, I don't believe it!" Chater nodded solemnly.



Reading over what I wrote yesterday, it would seem that I was uneasy. A form of prescience, I am sure. Now the child has been given back to the mother, I can relax. For a time it was worrying.

What made me telephone again and change the venue I shall never know. She answered herself because the secretary was out, and that was fortunate as I do not like others to hear my voice. I was right, for, driving past her block when this Tarlyon woman was with me, I saw several men who looked like officers entering her doorway, arriving for the rendezvous I had altered.

Oh, it was all so drab. I wonder by what miracle of science the motion picture industry can give glamour and appeal to its shadows so that they entice men when verily, they are reticent suburbanites with the inhibitions of the seventies?

But of that enough. There remains Arthur George Zink, a *third* devil.

Of course I might say to him enquire and be damned; even

Zink gives up if confronted by a blank wall, but he might probe at the bank and discover the facts of the transfer of all *her* money to *me*, and that—how foolish!—by one cheque. Then my roots might be dug at—no, I could not stand it.

A most iniquitous dilemma. Perhaps it would be better if I curbed my almost pathological fastidiousness and became content with humbler foods; obviously, I am taking the most incredible chances.

It has all been so startling since I concluded the last paragraph that I am writing from memory, verbatim; my memory is excellent for detail.

In the excitement of returning little Julius Richard, and its results, I forgot to renew my supply of cigarettes. There are a dozen shops almost outside my door, and I dashed out, forgetting my current habit of initial reconnaissance through the hall window.

And there he was right on my doorstep with his hand raised to the knocker. A vague smile hovered on his brownish face, more dust than ever sat on his awful old hat and there was a fat manilla folder, tied with red tape, under one arm.

"Ah, Mr. Damon? I've tried to get you several times of late, sir. This *is* lucky. My chief's quite peeved, you might say."

In the manner of defiant rabbits or obstinate sheep—do I strain simile too far?—Zink was a creature at bay, an odious, bogusly jovial creature wagging a cautionary finger in mock stricture.

"Sorry, Mr. Zink." I hid my fury excellently. "I must go. Urgent business. Another day?"

"I must *insist*, Mr. Damon, truly I must." He touched his plump folder. "After all, it is Crown business, sir." He waved to the busy road behind him as if he were acting a part; I was not sure if he was indicating the battered old motor-cycle at the kerb—Zink, on a motor-cycle!—until he added, "Yes, Crown business, sir. All behind me, you know—the Government, the people, the armed forces. Yes, yes, and even the Queen herself. Remarkable, isn't it, all in this folder? All saying, 'Assist our trusty servant, Arthur George Zink'." He giggled and looked at me imploringly, hoping I was diverted by this awful facetiousness.

There was nothing for it but the lounge. There he disposed himself, put down his hat and gloves, and considered me, patting his folder before opening it.

"Here we are, Mr. Damon. Now . . ." He dug out papers, droned on from interminable notes, reading from forgotten records and matters overlooked by the intermission of war, but now disinterred because the Government wanted money and the great hunt was on, one which makes the 'Mounties' mere amateurs. H.M.'s Inspectors of Taxes are leaving no stone unturned.

"I quite understand." I said it for something to say. "All in the records?"

"Here." Zink patted his file, beaming. "Aow indeed, the Mary Damon matter from beginning to end. If I lost it . . . why, we'd never be able to do a thing!" He giggled.

"Indeed? But I have said *I* will give you a cheque for all the owings, Mr. Zink, estimated, assessed or otherwise. I pay my own income tax, don't I?"

"Right on the nail, sir. Most commendable. But it isn't that simple, you see. You've paid it all most proper, but you acquired a large sum of money, sudden like. You see, a cheque for all the owings isn't quite what I want.

"What we do want is details from the lady herself as to her income over the war years, and, come to that, details of your own earnings *prior* to the war. You see how it is? It's not that we think we're being cheated, sir." He gave a most jolly chuckle. "It's records. We simply *must* have the returns properly completed."

"Even though I've offered to pay——"

"Very good of you, too." Zink peered at me. The awareness in his brown eyes shocked me. "I mean to say, you couldn't rightly pay without an assessment on the lady, and the lady can't be assessed without her personal returns. I'll have to talk to her, or her bank, sir." He got out some scratch paper. "Now, sir, you can give me certain facts. I know I'm pestering you now all of a sudden, like, but this file got shifted to Colwyn Bay and lost for the duration, you might say. Now it's come to light again, of course, I'm hard at it." He beamed at me expectantly, kindly, his pen poised ready.

I rose and began to talk, and though I have often written it, I never realised the tenuous hold of humanity on life. Arthur George Zink did not even look up from his writing as I hit him with the small footstool, the very stool I used to sit on when Mother read to me.

I snatched up the papers first. They were all there, right back

to the days long, long before the war. The incredible organisation of these people !

The anthracite stove in the kitchen wiped out the whole Damon file in minutes, leaving ash I broke with the poker.

That left Zink. I stared at him, crumpled, shabby, and faintly obscene. I thought death possessed dignity. Zink had only a grubby, shoddy pettiness, like a badly-stuffed dummy, his skin patchy and his beard manifest under the surface. The lounge made him look cheap and silly, a sorry middle-class intruder. It struck me that class distinctions do not cease with death. Corpses have no social graces.

The disposal of Zink was easier than I imagined. Back now at my table, writing all this down, I am amazed at the general simplicity.

I am not expert in the disposal of bodies, but common sense is a guide. I chose the coal cellar where, in spite of fictional advices to the contrary, people do not go probing.

My hair protected with a handkerchief, an old pair of pyjamas over my clothes, and I was ready. I shifted a lot of coal to one side, raised two of the cracked flagstones and dug Zink's grave in the sour crushed earth. I buried him well down, with his belongings, and replaced the flagstones. A handful of dust from my vacuum cleaner was next, this being sprinkled over and into the crevices round the replaced stones. The completion of this process I left to the coal which I put back in its original resting place. The quantity of soil I had left over was disposed of in the toilet.

There was only one more step. Being spring and past the time for fires, it was still possible a vigilant searcher—if he ever appeared !—might look at my coal with a penetrating eye. To make everything safe I plugged home my electric fan in the kitchen, ran the fan to the length of its flex, that is to the coal cellar door. I threw a few handfuls of vacuum cleaner dust in the air in front of the whirling fan and closed the cellar door at last, certain that Zink was safe for ever.

My working pyjamas I burnt in the anthracite stove and I was sitting down at peace with the world, safe at last, and writing this record when the front door was suddenly assaulted with a loud and solemn knocking, so arresting and unexpected that my hand continued writing automatically, until I convinced my conscience that it was not Zink, returned ! I went downstairs.

Chater's sniff was loud as it was contemptuous.

"The unluckiest criminal in history."

"Damon?" Leeds's cherubic face was deeply troubled. "Unique. Making the mothers pay—um—that is, setting the kidnap ransoms as nights of—um—pleasure."

"Ah." Chater's lankiness was surmounted by a head eloquent of a sort of sardonic madness: he did not even speak rudely to this mealy-mouthed Sassenach who could not call a spade a spade. "Picked them beautiful and had them instead of cash. Never been thought of before, and they paid like lambs. Ach, women!"

"But . . ." Leeds, for once, was out of his depth.

"He picked the lonely mothers, the good-lookers. Says he was so fastidious that he wanted only the handpicked few, and got them the way he did." Chater suddenly had a plum in his mouth. "Played on their maternal instincts, their vanity, and the plain goat in them: more women have it than you'd suspect, especially the headliners."

"I'm lost." Leeds was shaking a mournful head. "The fellow's mad, going after all—in a woman you'd call it nymphomania, I suppose—I don't know what in men."

Chater stared at him and went to the door of the office, returning with a little man stout as Leeds was stout, but more serious and weighty in his manner: that he was an expert of something was obvious even before he spoke.

"Utterly extraordinary," he began without waiting to be introduced. "Most perfect example of the adrenogenital syndrome——"

"Professor Tcherpalein, St. Martha's Hospital, Department of Forensic Psychiatry," Chater murmured with sardonic unctuousness.

"Eh?" The professor paused and stared. "Quite, quite. Perfect example, you know. Had a long talk to him in the cell at . . .?" He stared blindly at Chater who bowed, winked slyly at Leeds, and said, "Cannon Row Police Station, sir; this is New Scotland Yard."

"Really?" Tcherpalein glanced round as if he doubted it. "If you say so." He beamed at Leeds whom he thought of as somebody of great importance who would, obviously, permit him more time with the fascinating specimen in Cannon Row. "You look puzzled, sir. A layman, but, I am sure, a most intelligent one?" Tcherpalein's chuckle was a guttural Teutonic sound.

"Very simple, you see. Adrenogenital syndrome, sir—that is, the syndrome might be defined as the condition where secondary male sex characters appear in the female: the primary and secondary feminine characters and their functions become retrogressed.

"In brief, sir, endocrine disturbances—I should deal with the question of tumours and cortical hyperplasia if I am to elucidate."

"It means," Chater said with the smooth efficiency of a UNO translator at work, "a perfectly innocent and seemingly healthy female who turns into a full-blown male with all the trimmings. Aye, Professor?"

"Well . . . yes . . ." Tcherpalein wriggled.

Leeds grew red, prodding the book in front of him.

"Yes; I've read this journal of Damon's. It's weird."

"Oh, no." Tcherpalein eyed the book, greedily. "I recommend you to the excellent American, Harvey Cushing, or to Broster, Bullock, Sequeria—it is a well-documented condition. The symptom is not new . . ." His eyes gleamed and he climbed on an invisible rostrum. "It is, gentlemen, Nature in a retrograde evolutionary spiral, if my paradox may be forgiven me, moving towards an intersex type. That is something in our immediate future, I assure you, a distinct third sex. Now Damon . . ."

Leeds listened blindly until he caught at reality in the explanation of the secret and discreet operation Damon had undergone which completed the transition from Mary Damon to Frank Damon, the devil that had descended inexplicably on a helpless woman.

"Amazing," Tcherpalein continued happily. "Subject was a nymphomaniac in the female state. This was transmitted without change to the male Damon, proving, what we did not know before—that though superficial tastes change, a basic mania remains unchanged. Yet our patient is feminine in his expert ability in caring for, and quieting his small charges, and of no sex or both in an acquired fastidiousness which he admits impelled him to . . ." He was still chattering when Chater eased him from the office and told him to go back to Cannon Row, which he did like a child with complete licence over an unguarded candy store.

"Holy God, and just *what* is the Director of Public Prosecutions going to do with that in open court?" Leeds leaned forward. "Tom, is Damon sane?"

"Ah." Chater became smug. "It will be six of one and half a dozen of the other when the psychiatrists get at the poor loon." He made a Highland noise like 'Im'phm'. "Changed his sex from a her to a him, starting this kidnapping racket to . . . Havers! I'm not surprised at the fits and handspins in that diary about Zink, probing to find Mary Damon. Horrific, isn't it? Ironic, eh? He didn't want to be shown up to the world, but wouldn't Zink have to do that? I mean, just what does an income tax inspector do when a client who was a woman becomes a man? He'd talk his fool head off, suspecting cunning fraud. The I.T. people always do."

"But, murder?"

"All right, then he's insane. Nothing but blazing irony to the very end.

"Thaper, of the uniform division, watched Zink park his motor-cycle outside Damon's house, in a prohibited area, and Constable Thaper waited. Oh, aye, he waited. People could've been coshed before his eyes," Chater added with savage bitterness, "but Thaper had his eye on a traffic offender, waiting for Arthur George Zink to reclaim his crummy old bike."

"He watched for two hours," Leeds interrupted hotly.

"And why not?" Chater was seraphic. "Wasn't Zink parked in a forbidden zone? That's a *real* capture for a thief taker, you ken?" His eyes were glass chips. "Thaper was going to pinch a *motorist*, but the sinner never turned up so Thaper banged on Damon's door.

"And Damon, poor soul, nearly fell down dead at the sight of the constable, and blew his top for the frightened woman at heart he was, and practically led the way to Zink snuggled down under the coal where we'd never have thought of looking, so well was it done.

"Tcherpalein can make a note in his little book that a woman can become a man, adrenogenital syndrome and all, but blind terror at the sight of the unexpected and dominating male under authority reacts on the fundamentally female instinct in only one way. It was Constable Thaper's lucky day."

Leeds mentally surveyed the whole muddled ugly tale and made that helpless gesture of a man in real life confronted with a nightmare.

BRIEFS

THE MARTINET

CHARLOTTE MACLEOD

*The Victorian father now
and then appears . . .
and disappears*

“COME ALONG, EVANGELINE. You spend altogether too much time on that nonsense. A walk will do you good. Bring the Mycologia.”

“Yes, father.”

Evangeline had been trained to obey. She laid down her brushes, fetched her garden basket and the beautiful old manuscript book in which a long-dead ancestor had depicted the mushrooms of the British Isles, each one exquisitely hand-drawn and coloured, with its name and pertinent fact meticulously lettered beneath it in a minute and elegant hand. It was a work of art, a museum piece. To Mr. Chadwick-Byrne, it was something to identify mushrooms by.

When she came back, he had torn a strip off the drawing she had been toiling over for the past two days, and rolled it into a spill to light his pipe. It was no use to protest. Even though her dainty water-colours were as expertly done as any in the Mycologia, a woman could never be a serious artist. Women existed only to be dutiful wives; or to keep house for their fathers if the wife failed so far in her duty as to die before her time.

There had been no question of Evangeline's marrying. Suitors had not been lacking twenty years before, as she had been a sweetly pretty girl and the Chadwick-Byrnes were known to have money; but Mrs. Chadwick-Byrne was already ailing and the young men were not encouraged.

At sixty-eight, Mr. Chadwick-Byrne was a bluff, hearty man who showed every sign of living to ninety. He was an outdoor man, given to hunting and to nature walks of the sort that involved killing butterflies, taking birds' nests, uprooting botanical specimens, and picking things he could take home and devour. He

was particularly fond of mushrooming.

Evangeline would have enjoyed the walks if she had been allowed to drift peacefully down the woodland paths, stopping where the fancy seized her to sketch or simply enjoy the loveliness of a flower, a bird, the pattern of branches against the sky without being expected to identify, uproot, or gather into a basket; but her father did not tolerate slacking. Naturally, she was not allowed to use the binoculars except as an infrequent and grudging favour, or to do any of the serious work of identifying specimens. She merely carried the basket, the reference books, or the cyanide jars; and hovered close behind her father's elbow to hand them over as required.



Mushrooms were scarce that day. Mr. Chadwick-Byrne was irritated. He did not exactly say it was Evangeline's fault, but he was sharp with her for dawdling even more frequently than usual. She was quite exhausted and immensely relieved when they finally came on a clump of bright orange mushrooms.

"Ah, chanterelles," exclaimed her father.

"Do you really think so, father?" said Evangeline dubiously. "I should have said—"

"When I want your opinion, I shall ask for it," he snapped. "Give me the *Mycologia*."

He flipped through the loose pages, regardless of their fragility. "Ah, there you are. *Cantharellus Cibarius*. Beautiful specimens, perfect in every detail. Really, Evangeline, I had hoped, after all my patient efforts, to have taught you a few of the elements of mycology. Here, read it for yourself."

He thrust the *Mycologia* at her and knelt to gather his find into the basket. Cowed, she admitted that the mushrooms matched the illustration in every respect and must therefore, indeed, be chanterelles, one of the great delicacies among the edible mushrooms. Though it was doubtful, considering the small quantity in the patch, whether anybody but her father would get to enjoy them.

After the chanterelles, they found scarcely anything but a few puff-balls which had burst and were therefore inedible, and one beautiful but deadly *Amanita Phalloides* around which Evangeline made a wide circle, shuddering. Nevertheless, Mr. Chadwick-Byrne returned to the house in fine fettle.

"Here, Mrs. Felt." He thrust the basket at the elderly woman

who had cooked for them since Evangeline was a baby. "We'll have these for lunch, with an omelette."

Mrs. Felt peered doubtfully into the basket. "If you say so, sir." She, too, knew better than to argue.

Neither his daughter nor his cook was surprised when Mr. Chadwick-Byrne helped himself so lavishly to mushrooms at lunch that none were left for them. Both were horrified a few hours later when he collapsed in agony on the drawing-room rug. He was retching so violently that he could not even gasp out instructions to call the doctor; and neither of them dared take the initiative until it was too late.

After it was all over, the cook explained to the police that she had not liked the look of the mushrooms.

"But the master was such a positive man, sir. It was no use trying to tell him anything once he'd made up his mind."

The sergeant nodded. Mr. Chadwick-Byrne had been well-known in the village.

"And what did you think, Miss Chadwick-Byrne? I understand you were with your father when he picked them."

"I—yes, I was. I did ask father—I said I didn't think—but he showed me the picture in the Mycologia, and he said they were—"

"What is this Mycologia? Could I see it, please?"

"Yes, of course." She fetched the priceless portfolio, and handed it to him.

"Lovely thing, this. Ought to be in a museum." The policeman reached to turn a leaf of the yellowed parchment, hesitated. "Would you mind showing me the picture of the mushrooms he ate."

She laid the book down on a small table and shuffled carefully through the drawings until she found the one showing the trumpet-shaped cups of *Cantharellus Cibarius*. "This is what father said they were."

The faint accent on the word 'said' caught the sergeant's ear. "But you didn't agree?"

She flushed. "Father knew so much more about it than I did. I—I couldn't very well contradict him. But I did think they were rather more like this picture here." She found another plate.

"*Clitocybe Illudens*." The policeman made rather a hash of the Latin. "Jack-my-Lantern. Poisonous. Same colour, more or less the same shape when they've begun to go by. I can see where he might have mixed them up. Tricky things, mushrooms. Well, it looks as though you were right and your father wrong, Miss

Chadwick-Byrne. You mustn't take it too hard. Death by misadventure, I think we're safe in saying."



After he had gone, Evangeline carried the Mycologia back up to her room. From a bureau drawer she took the page she had removed when she took it down to show the policeman. It was an exact replica of the drawing they had just been discussing, with each delicately venomous gill and spore of *Clitocyde Illudens* rendered in meticulous detail. And beneath it, in the same exquisite, spidery script as all the other plants, ran the description: *Cantharellus Cibarius*, Edible.

She would have to burn the page, of course; but she hated to. It was far and away the best thing she had ever done.

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Some EWMM Contributors . . .

Christopher Curtis. Journalist of considerable experience, and a wide traveller. Knows a lot about what goes on 'behind the news headlines.'

Charlotte Macleod. Basically an artist, Miss Macleod is Canadian born, but lives and works in Massachusetts. Many of her pictures have been bought for private collections. A highly capable graphologist, she worked in advertising and is now a writer.

Eric Parr. Author of the famous *Grafters All*. Is an expert on the ways of the Fraternity (of Criminals). Writes for TV, and frequently makes personal appearances.

Peter Wallace. Born Rhyl; served in the Army, 1953-4. Wrote his first magazine story for *EWMM*, but has written for periodicals. Married, with two children. Lives in Anglesey. No relation to EW.

Thomasina Weber. Scottish born, but has made her home in Florida. Specialises in mysteries for grown-ups, but particularly enjoys writing songs and stories for juveniles. Author of a book of songs widely used in USA educational TV.

Colin Wilson born 1931 in Leicester. Wrote his best-selling *The Outsider* at 24. Co-editor of *The Encyclopaedia of Murder*. Lives in Cornwall but at present is in the U.S.A. for a prolonged stay.

RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY

THOMASINA WEBER

*The small fears drive, and
the great fears grow
into the last means
of escape*

FAYE GILMER was never able to understand what had compelled her to speak to the shivering woman on the park bench that evening, much less bring her home to her small apartment. Faye's husband had died shortly after Ann's birth, and since that time Faye and her four year-old daughter had lived in the old apartment house where Mrs. Brimm, a competent, middle-aged neighbour, took care of Ann while Faye was at work. It was not a happy life, but Faye did not expect happiness.

Although the woman on the bench had been silent, self-effacing and timid on the way to the apartment, a remarkable change came over her when the child was brought downstairs by Mrs. Brimm. The woman's face seemed to glow and the cheeks grow fuller. Her voice lost its curiously flat monotone and took on a musical lilt. She looked like a different person.

The next morning Faye awoke to the smell of bacon frying and coffee perking. I must have died and gone to heaven, she thought as she got out of bed. But apparently heaven had dropped by to visit her own kitchen. Ann, dressed and beaming, was at the table with a bowl of hot cereal before her. The woman, Nettie, was cracking eggs into a bowl. She was wearing a dark skirt, too long for current fashion, and a pink and white dotted blouse. Her hair was in a neat bun at the nape of her neck. She was approximately the same age and build as Faye.

Faye poured herself a cup of coffee. "This is perfectly lovely,

Nettie, but you didn't have to do it."

"I wanted to do it. To show my appreciation."

"Nettie's nice," said Ann between mouthfuls of cereal. "Is she going to stay with us?"

Faye raised her cup to her lips and took a long slow drink, trying to think of a suitable reply. But Nettie saved her the trouble. "No, dear," she said to the little girl, "I was only invited for the night." It sounded like a rebuke, but the friendly smile on Nettie's face denied this. "As soon as I tidy up your lovely little home, I am going to go out and find a nice home of my own."

"Well, there's really not that much of a rush," Faye heard herself saying. "I mean, if you don't find anything today, you are welcome to spend another night here."

And that is how Nettie moved in. It did not take long for Faye to wonder how she lived without her. Faye's life had been almost unbearable since her husband's death. If Gerald Sparks had not hired her to help him in his dress shop, she would have lost her mind by now. As it was, the constant rush to get up, get dressed, get breakfast, get to work, get home, get dinner, get Ann bathed and bedded with no time or energy left over to enjoy her daughter, just to be together, kept her tense and on edge. And to make matters worse, Mrs. Brimm had given notice that she was going to move, and gone would be Ann's baby-sitter.

But Nettie had saved the day. Faye still found it hard to believe that a meal could be on the table which she herself had not thrown together, or that the apartment could be fresh and clean with no effort at all on her part.

"Nettie, you haven't told me anything about yourself," said Faye one evening at dinner. "Who are you? Where do you come from?"

"There is not much to tell. My last job was in the Midwest. I was housekeeper for a wealthy family. When the wife died, I left."

"But why? I should think they would need you all the more with the wife gone."

"I—my employer and I had the words. I decided it would be best if I left."

"Why did you come to this city?"

"Why not? One city is as good as another."

The following day Faye was counting the minutes until closing time when the door chimed, indicating the entrance of a customer.

Gerald was working by the cash register and Faye was returning a dress to the rack.

"Good afternoon," she heard Gerald say.

"You must be Gerald." Faye turned at the sound of Nettie's voice. Holding Ann by the hand, Nettie walked toward him. She was wearing a black sheath Faye had given her and Faye's string of pearls. She looked stunning indeed and Faye tried to swallow the anger she felt at the sight of the pearls. She had not given Nettie permission to wear them. Since she kept them in a box in her bureau drawer, Nettie must have been searching through her things to have found them. "Faye has told me so much about you, Gerald."

Faye stepped forward. "Nettie is staying with us," she said dryly. "She keeps house and takes care of Ann."

Gerald had not taken his eyes off Nettie. "That is very good of you," he said to her.

"Anything I can do to help," Nettie said, swinging her body in a graceful quarter turn. "This certainly is a lovely shop."

Faye could stand no more. She walked briskly into the back room to get her jacket. If those two wanted to devour each other with their eyes, there was no law saying she had to stand there and watch. Gerald had never looked at her like that. In fact, he seemed to bend over backwards to be gentlemanly. Apparently Nettie had a different effect on him. As Faye was digging through her purse for her car keys, she had the odd feeling that there was something else which was not quite right—something which had nothing to do with Gerald.

In the end, she said nothing to Nettie about the pearls. It was entirely possible that they had not been in the drawer at all, that Faye had inadvertently left them on top of her dressing table. She remembered wearing them the previous day with the high-necked silk.

As the days went by, Faye began to grow increasingly uneasy. She could not put her finger on any one cause, but there were many small things. Nettie had cut, dyed and styled her hair in an exact imitation of Faye's. She began to use Faye's mannerisms. Whether consciously or unconsciously, she began to speak in the same way, adopting her phrases, her figures of speech. She had, however, a more forceful way about her, a more self-confident air than Faye. This gave Faye a sense of indecision, self-doubt, and a need to be always on the defensive.

When Friday evening came, Nettie announced she had some

personal shopping to do and would take Ann for a walk to the nearby shopping centre. Faye went into the bedroom to get her purse. When she came out, Nettie and Ann were at the door, Ann with her toy tiger clutched in her arm.

"Where are you going, Mommy?"

"Why, I thought I would walk along with you," Faye replied.

Ann looked up at Nettie. "Will that be all right?" she asked.

The roaring in Faye's ears drowned out Nettie's reply. Faye felt as if a door had been slammed in her face. The shock of it brought the sudden realization of what had seemed amiss several days ago in the dress shop. Although Ann had come in with Nettie, the little girl had not rushed up to greet her mother.

The gay banter that passed between Ann and Nettie did nothing to improve Faye's mood as they walked along the street. She thought bitterly of their life before Nettie. Maybe it had been hectic and maybe they had not eaten such delicious, well-balanced meals, but they had had each other. They had depended upon each other. They had been happy together. Faye glanced down at Ann. The little girl was laughing up at Nettie as Nettie rattled on, telling Ann some foolishness about a bear and a possum and a mother hen. Faye thought of the mornings when Ann had cried as Faye left for work. And she thought of the evenings when Ann had tried to cling to her mother as Faye moved about the apartment cooking or cleaning. And how many times had Ann begged for a bedtime story when Faye was nearly blind with fatigue? Could Faye honestly say her daughter had been happy?

"Hey, long time no see!" He was standing in Faye's path smiling down at her.

"Well. Harry," said Faye stiffly. She watched his eyes move to Nettie. His smile took on a peculiar fixity.

"I'm Faye's brother—Harry Horner," he said.

"How do you do? I'm Nettie, Faye's friend."

"You don't remember your Uncle Harry, do you, sweetheart?" he said, crouching down before Ann. "The last time I saw you you were no bigger than a tiddley-wink." Ann giggled and Harry stood up to face his sister. "How have you been, Faye?"

"All right," she replied. "And you?"

"Can't complain."

"If you will excuse us," said Nettie, "Ann and I will meet you in the dime store."

When they had gone, Harry frowned. "Who is she? Have you

known her long "

"Don't tell me she has captivated you, too."

"Not quite, sister. Now answer my question."

"She is living with us, if you must know. She takes care of Ann while I go to work."

"Living with you! Get rid of her, Faye, and don't waste any time about it."

"Why? Do you know her?"

"I have never seen her before."

"Then what are you getting so excited about? Nettie has been a godsend to me."

"Listen Faye, you just take my word for it. You've got to get rid of her before it's too late "

"This brotherly concern is so touching, coming from you."

"It isn't my fault we have lost touch," he said. "You're the one who turned your nose up at me after I got out of jail. You wouldn't be caught dead associating with an ex-convict, much less admit to being related to one."

"You know how close we were as children, Harry. I was very disappointed in you when you chose the kind of life you did."

"I've only been in jail once."

"You were only caught once. If it had been a youthful mistake, it would have been forgivable. But to you it's a way of life. You are still earning your living by illegal means."

"It's a good living, Faye. And if you weren't such a stiff neck, I could have made your life easier for you."

"I told you when I returned your cheques I would not accept your charity."

"I don't consider a brother trying to help his widowed sister an act of charity. Regardless of your attitude, my feelings for you have not changed."

"I must be going." She tried to step past him, but he caught her arm.

"Faye, I don't care if you never listen to me again, but listen now. Get that woman out of your life."

"Since you give me no reason, I don't see why I should do such a thing."

"I would explain if I could, Faye, but I don't understand it myself. All I know is that when I looked into her eyes, I felt colder than I have ever felt in my life. I know as sure as I'm standing here that you must get rid of her."

"You always were a romantic, Harry. Maybe that is why you

couldn't settle down and get a job like a normal man."

"I live at the Greenbay Apartments. Call me if you need me."

"Goodbye, Harry."



Faye found Nettie and Ann in the dime store, and together they went to the lingerie shop where Faye bought a frilly white blouse of sheer nylon. "This will go so well with that black silk skirt of yours," said Nettie. Then she put her hand to her mouth. "Oh dear, I'm afraid I forgot to ask permission to wear it. And I've already bought a blouse to go with it! How dreadful of me."

Faye had a sudden impulse to remind Nettie that she could return the blouse, but instead she said, "Of course you may wear my skirt. It's rather dressy, though."

"Exactly what I want. Gerald is taking me to The Rooftop for dinner and dancing tomorrow night."

"Gerald!"

"Oh, didn't I tell you? He phoned and invited me yesterday. It must have been during your lunch hour," She laughed softly. "He says my resemblance to you is uncanny."

But there must be something different about us, thought Faye furiously, because in all the years I have known Gerald, he has never asked me for a date.

Ann was disconsolate as she watched Nettie dress the following evening. Faye promised her they would walk down to the drug-store for an ice-cream soda, but even this treat, which formerly had been enough to project Ann into seventh heaven, failed to comfort her. But, Faye took her firmly by the hand and they left; she had no intention of being at home when Gerald called for Nettie.

The evening was a failure. Ann pouted, and spilled her soda on her clean dress and Faye lost her temper and practically dragged the whimpering child home. She bathed her and put her to bed and then sat in the darkened living room and looked out the window. In the street below people hurried along, each one full of plans and dreams and goals. Everyone seemed to know where he was going but Faye. She felt so aimless; it worried her. Perhaps Harry was right about Nettie. Despite her usefulness to Faye, maybe she was a bad influence. True, Ann was happier now, but this was not much of a recommendation. If anything, it was a mark against Nettie. She was coming between Faye and her

daughter. Faye could not afford to lose her perspective. They had got along before Nettie came; they could get along without her.

Faye broke it to Nettie the next morning before Ann was awake. Nettie accepted it calmly. "Of course, Faye. If you want me to leave, I will do so immediately. After all, you are my employer and I'm here only to serve you."

Faye wished she had not put it that way. She had made Faye feel as if she was turning her best friend out to face the wolves. Faye had paid her a meagre salary, and since Nettie spent it freely on treats for Ann and small necessities for herself, Faye felt sure she had no money saved. The woman would be right back where she started from.

An agonised wail from the bedroom brought Faye to her feet. She hurried in to see Ann, her arms around Nettie's neck, sobbing into the woman's shoulder as she knelt on the rug.

"Hush now, it isn't that bad," said Nettie. "Didn't I teach you to write just like the big girls who go to school?" The head nodded without lifting. "Well, then, think what fun we'll have! As soon as I get settled in a new place, I will send you my address, and you will write me a letter. And I will write you a letter back to and it will be just as if we are still together."

"Don't go!"

"You know that little whistle the mailman has, don't you? He blows it whenever he leaves a letter in someone's mailbox. Well, just think, Ann! When you hear his whistle, you will know that he has brought you a letter of your very own to open and read all by yourself!"

But Ann would not be consoled. Nettie picked her up and put her on the bed next to her toy tiger, but the child would not let go of her. Nettie picked up the tiger and forced it between herself and the child. One chubby arm wound around the furry animal. Faye had never heard Ann cry so heartbrokenly. Faye sighed. There was only one thing she could do.

Nettie accepted her reprieve graciously, and a week later it was as if the request to leave had never been made. That is, as far as Nettie and Ann were concerned. As for Faye, she became more tense and irritable. She regarded herself with a greater degree of contempt when she realized how miserably she had failed.

She went to work each day, and although Gerald was now taking Nettie out every other evening, his attitude toward Faye remained the same. He was friendly, considerate and free with

his praise. "I can't get over it," he would often say, stopping in the middle of adding a column of figures or pricing a new shipment of dresses. "Are you sure Nettie is not related to you?"

"Absolutely sure, Gerald. She is only a woman I picked up on a park bench." It was getting to be an old song.

"The resemblance is amazing. Why, if it wasn't for the way she talks, sometimes I would swear it was you sitting next to me."

"What do you mean, 'the way she talks'?"

Gerald had the grace to blush. "Well, not the way she talks, exactly, but her manner as a whole, let's say."

"Oh?"

"Give me a hand with these dresses, Faye."

"Don't change the subject, Gerald. What is the big difference between us?"

"I'd rather not—"

"Please, Gerald."

"Now, don't be offended. You are a wonderful girl, Faye, and I don't know what I would do without you. But you are wonderful in your own way, and Nettie—"

"Is wonderful in her own way?"

"She is more self-confident than you are. She seems to have a more definite grasp of life. I admire that in a woman."

"She's strong," Faye said.

"Well, yes. I guess you could put it that way. She does have a strong personality."

"Then if she is so much more—outgoing than I, why don't you fire me and give her my job?"

Gerald laughed. "That isn't quite what I have in mind for Nettie," he said.

Faye had not known it was possible to hate anyone as fervently as she hated Nettie. All the way home she rehearsed her speech and changed it each time she did so. Finally she calmed down enough to realize that anger would not help her. It would work against her, if anything. Already she felt alternately hot and cold and waves of weakness assailed her, making her wonder if she could go through with it without collapsing. She must think of Ann; she must avoid a scene. She would quietly, calmly, tell Nettie she would have to leave, that Faye was going to make other arrangements.

This time Nettie was not so obliging. Her eyes took on a scornful look and her smile gave Faye a chill. "You are just like all the rest," Nettie told her, "you are so quick to offer to help, but

you don't really mean it. It's just an act to soothe your own conscience."

"But I did help you."

"And I helped you. Or have you forgotten?"

"No, I have not forgotten. I'm very grateful to you."

"Apparently."

Faye could feel herself weakening. How could this woman do this to her? What was there about her that could reduce Faye to a spineless blob? "I don't expect you to leave tonight," she said. "Tomorrow will be soon enough."

"You are the soul of generosity."



Faye awoke the next morning with a fever. Her pyjamas were damp and her pillow-case was wet. Her hair felt thick and matted. She tried to get up but sank back as dizziness hit her. She pulled the covers up to her chattering chin.

Nettie, coming in with orange juice, put the tray down and hurried to her bedside. "Oh, you poor thing! I'll call the doctor at once."

Things were not too clear after that. Two days later, when the worst of it was over, Faye found out that Nettie had tended her constantly, sending Ann upstairs to stay with Mrs. Brimm, who had two weeks left before moving. The doctor had praised Nettie highly and told Faye how lucky she was to have had such a dedicated nurse. Gerald called to tell Faye to be sure to give herself enough time to recover completely before returning to work.

She was up and around, although still rather weak, when Nettie said she was going to go to Gerald's shop to help him. Although Faye was disturbed at this development, it worked out well for every one. Gerald was pleasantly surprised at Nettie's competence, Nettie was stimulated by the change, and Faye regained her strength. But it was only her physical strength which returned. Nettie made no mention of either leaving or resuming her former duties, and Faye accepted her new role without comment. Ann, subdued with Nettie away, seemed to come alive only when evening approached bringing her home again—chic, vibrant, full of talk about her day at the shop.

On Saturday evening Gerald took Nettie out. Ann was fretful, so Faye put her to bed early, then switched on the radio. A love

song brought tears to her eyes as she realized how lonely she was. It was as if she was a superfluous person, not needed by anyone. She had to get back into the mainstream of life. She seemed to be losing her identity. She simply had to get rid of Nettie. She knew she was no match for Nettie in a confrontation, so that left only one way.

She searched her mind for a way to do it. She tried to recall all the murder mysteries she had ever read. Finally she hit upon the one way to kill Nettie at a time when she herself would have a firm alibi. It was very simple, really, and would tie in perfectly with the present circumstances. The only drawback was the murder weapon. Where in the world would Faye be able to get a bomb?

And then she thought of her brother. He ought to be able to get one for her. He had always been a genius at making things with his hands. Although she did not like the idea of asking for help, still he was her brother and she was fighting an important battle. She picked up the phone.

Harry arrived within twenty minutes. "Gee, Faye, what has happened to you?" he said, when she let him in. "You look awful."

"I've been sick," she replied, "but I didn't call you here to hold my hand."

"All right. What did you call me for?"

"I want you to make me a bomb."

"A *bomb!*" His astonished grin quickly changed to concern. "Are you all right, Faye?"

"Of course I'm all right," she snapped. "Just get me the bomb and don't ask any questions."

"Now, hold on a minute, Sis. If you're playing a game with me, at least let me in on the rules."

She sat down beside him on the couch, suddenly unable to stand any longer. She could feel the sweat break out on her forehead. She was still far from well. "You were right about Nettie. I must get her out of my life. I don't know what she is doing to me, but it can't go on much longer. I have asked her to leave, but she stays, and I can't do a thing about it."

Harry's face was grave. "Are you sure you want a bomb?"

"Absolutely. It has to have a timing device and I will give you the details just as soon as I get all the arrangements made."

The arrangements were easier to make than she had expected. There was a buyers' convention scheduled for the following week, and it had been part of her duties to attend these conventions and do the buying while Gerald kept the shop open. Faye seemed to

have a natural instinct for selecting styles that would be a success with their customers and Gerald usually gave her a bonus after each convention. The next morning Faye went to the shop and asked Gerald to go out with her for coffee. She began by telling him she was ready to return to work. He was pleased, for although he was satisfied with Nettie's performance at the shop, some of his customers appeared to dislike her. When Faye told him she did not feel up to attending the convention, however, he was disturbed until Faye suggested he go himself, taking Nettie along to handle the details. And it was relatively easy to convince him next that Nettie should go on a day ahead to make the reservations and prepare the way.

Gerald reached for her hand across the table. "Faye, I don't know what good fortune brought you to me, but I hope you never leave me."

"I don't intend to, Gerald."

Nettie was delighted over her upcoming trip. The apartment was a flurry of packing, selecting and rejecting clothing, assembling accessories and cosmetics. Faye was generous and helpful. Ann watched quietly, bewildered by all the activity. Faye persuaded Nettie to take her car to the convention rather than travel by train or plane, since it would be more convenient once there to have a car at hand. She assured Nettie that she would not mind riding the bus to work.

On the night before Nettie was to leave, Gerald took her out to dinner. As soon as they were gone, Faye telephoned her brother. "Nettie will be leaving at ten o'clock tomorrow morning," she told him. "Bring it over at six."

Faye was watching at the window the next morning when Harry arrived, package under his arm. He waved to her, then disappeared in the direction of the rear of the building where the tenants parked their cars. Nettie was still asleep. A few minutes later Harry came in sight again, empty handed, gave her the sign of success, then got into his own car and drove away.

Nettie got up at seven o'clock, and the next two hours were a confusion of breakfast, Faye's preparing for her first day back at work, Ann's tearful distress when she learned she was to spend the day in Mrs. Brimm's care, and Nettie's preparations to leave.

"You be a good girl, Ann," Faye told her daughter. "Mrs. Brimm is moving tomorrow and she will be very busy today. Maybe she will let you help her pack." Ann stirred her cereal sullenly. Faye was glad to bid them goodbye.

It was good to be back in the quiet sanctuary of the dress shop. Gerald gave her a welcoming kiss which bounced Faye's heart up to her throat like a schoolgirl's. Everything was going to be all right. Two hours from now, at eleven o'clock, Faye's car would blow up, and with it Nettie and all of Faye's problems. She could feel her strength returning already. This may have been the most trying time in her life, but she had learned something from it. She had learned that she had an identity that was hers alone, and that she must never again let anyone rob her of it. And she had also learned what she lacked as far as Gerald was concerned. She smiled to herself as checked over the stock. Gerald was going to notice the change in her, beginning immediately. And while he recovered from Nettie's loss, she would be by his side.

It was a busy morning, and ordinarily lunch-time would have overtaken her unawares. But Faye's eyes followed the hands of the clock as she mentally accompanied Nettie on her journey. At ten-fifteen she phoned her apartment and the unanswered ring assured her that Nettie had left on time. At ten-thirty she pinpointed Nettie on her mental roadmap. Eleven o'clock had been a good choice. She would be an hour into her trip and it would be too early for lunch. Nettie would be on the high-speed main road then and the chances of any other car's being near enough to be damaged by the explosion would be slight.

By ten forty-five Faye could feel her stomach twisting painfully. She tried not to think of Nettie with only fifteen minute left to live. After all, Faye had had no choice. Nettie was a parasite and she had been slowly devouring Faye, absorbing her appearance, her life, her personality, her very being. And as she grew in strength, Faye weakened. It had been kill or be killed. Simple. She must think of it only in that light.

Faye was waiting on Mrs. Morgan when the minute hand began to crawl up to the hour of eleven. Had Harry been absolutely accurate? Maybe he had set it for five minutes after eleven. Or five minutes before. Faye looked at the clock. Maybe it had already happened. Mrs. Morgan spoke sharply to her, and Faye, for the first time since she had come to Gerald's dress shop, was grateful to their most irritable customer. She exerted herself to please Mrs. Morgan, selecting and carrying dress after dress to the fitting room while the clock moved onward, toward and finally beyond the hour of eleven.

At eleven-thirty Faye went out to lunch, but she could eat nothing. She did not feel the exhilaration she had expected. The

enormity of her deed was too great, the irrevocability of her act too sobering. She could feel only a low pitched relief at knowing she was free of Nettie at last. The buoyancy would come later, once her life had resumed its former pattern. And as she worked to revise it, improve it, heading always toward the goal she now had clearly in mind for herself and Ann, that was when the happiness would come, slowly but surely, and life would take on a flavour that it had lacked for too long.

Since Gerald was to leave by plane the next morning, the rest of the day was spent in bringing Faye up to date on developments during her absence and the bookwork that would have to be done while Gerald was away. Faye struggled to keep her mind on the business at hand.

Gerald offered to drive Faye home at closing time, but she declined. She felt a need to be alone.

As she unlocked her door, she could smell cabbage cooking upstairs. Mrs. Brimm was making her husband's favourite dinner—corned beef and cabbage. Faye glanced at the stairs, but Ann and Mrs. Brimm were not in sight.

Faye entered her apartment and looked about her. Everything was tidy. There were no dirty dishes in the kitchen sink. Nettie had left no disorder, no mess for Faye to clean up. Faye felt a flash of remorse. Nettie had had her good points.

She walked into the bedroom and slowly unbuttoned her jacket. The apartment was so quiet. It was almost as if Nettie had never been there, as if Nettie had never existed.

Faye moved wearily toward the bathroom. She wished Mrs. Brimm would bring Ann downstairs. The unnatural silence was unnerving. She switched on the radio. A male singer was cut off in mid-wail by a news bulletin. Faye held her breath and listened as he reported the mysterious explosion of an automobile traveling on the main road. As yet no identification had been made; there was very little left to work with.

Faye sank weakly down on the edge of Ann's bed. It was all over. The male singer was given a second chance and as she reached over to shut off the radio, she saw that the toy tiger was missing from Ann's pillow. In its place was a single sheet of paper with large wavy block printing on it. Not touching it, Faye looked down at it and read, 'I am going on a trip with my mommy. Bye-bye, Faye.'

THE CARTOONIST AND THE CRIME WRITERS



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PATRICIA HIGHSMITH



The Mind of Ian Brady

COLIN WILSON

Though a case told many times before, this deft treatment of the 'Moors' murder by a famous writer may answer many puzzling questions

IT NOW SEEMS certain that we shall never know the whole truth about the 'Moors' murder case. Ian Brady and Myra Hindley were charged with committing three murders, two of their victims being children. The real number of killings is almost certainly five, with a possibility of a sixth. We know in detail about one murder, the one that led to their arrest. Of the others, we know almost nothing—either about the motives, or the methods by which they were committed. When Brady and Myra Hindley were caught, they admitted almost nothing. Now they are both serving life sentences, it seems unlikely their silence will ever be broken.

A six o'clock on a damp October morning in 1965, a teenage couple tiptoed down the stairs of Underwood Court, a block of working class flats in Hattersley, Manchester. In his pocket the boy was carrying for protection a long bladed carving knife and a screw-driver, for he expected to be attacked by a murderer. Luckily, there was no one about in the grey streets, and he and his wife reached the telephone box at the corner of the street. Inside the box, they huddled together, peering out of the glass, and the boy said into the phone: 'Hello, is that the police?' When the call was over, they hurried into a dark gateway, and stood there shivering until the police car drew up.

Two hours later police surrounded a terraced house at 16, Wardle Brook Road, only a few hundred yards from Underwood Court. It looked an unlikely house for a murderer, the end house of a block of four, in a road of neat new dwellings. The police took care to keep out of sight. They had been told by their informant that the murderer possessed two loaded revolvers, and would not hesitate to use them.

The problem was that of getting into the house, and this was solved when Superintendent Talbot saw a baker's van. He borrowed a white coat from the delivery man, and a large basket with a few loaves. Then, with a plain clothes policeman, he approached number sixteen and knocked on the door. Neither of the policemen were armed, and when the door opened, they braced themselves for anything. But they were met only by a near-sighted girl whose bleached hair was still uncombed. The superintendent asked if her husband was in.

'I haven't got a husband', the girl said. She pronounced it 'oosband'. Anyone hearing that glottal accent would have known she came from Lancashire. The superintendent told her he was a policeman, and that he wanted to see the man of the house. She stared back impassively and said: 'There's no man 'ere.' But as the policemen pushed their way in, the girl gestured wearily toward the living room, saying 'E's in there, in bed'.

The man sitting on the divan, half covered with blankets, was wearing nothing but an undershirt, and was writing a note. Like the girl he stared at them impassively, showing no surprise when the police told him they were investigating a report of an 'act of violence'. It was the girl who said: 'There's nothing wrong 'ere'. The superintendent asked if they could search the two storey house. The girl shrugged.

There were only two bedrooms and a bathroom. In the first bedroom a semi-invalid old lady looked startled when they opened the door. The bathroom was empty. But the second bedroom was locked, and the girl claimed that she had left the key at the office where she worked. When Talbot said they would go and collect it, she dropped the bluff, and produced a key ring. Now the policemen stood with the two suspects outside the bedroom door, and the man and woman looked at one another. She said:

'Well, we'd better tell them'.

The man shrugged, and said in a soft Scottish, voice:

'There was a bit of a row last night. It's in there'.

'There' was the girl's bedroom, and under the window was a

bundle wrapped in a dark grey blanket. On top of it were some bloodstained books. In a carrier bag beside the bundle was a hatchet. There was also a light stick with blood on it.

The blanket contained the body of a seventeen year old youth, his knees trussed under his chin with electric light wire. He had been killed with fourteen blows of a hatchet.

The girl with the dyed blonde hair was Myra Hindley, age 23; the man was Ian Brady, four years older. For a pair of suspected killers, they were oddly nondescript. Myra was a plain girl with a squareish face, to which she could give a brassy kind of attractiveness by piling up her dyed hair and applying quantities of eye-shadow and bright lipstick. Brady was better looking, but hardly striking: a sullen face with more than a touch of the juvenile delinquent.

Brady's luck had definitely run out on that night of October 6th, 1965, when he and Myra Hindley picked up seventeen year-old Edward Evans in a Manchester public house. In jail, over the next few days, he must have spent a lot of time cursing himself for a series of stupid mistakes that had ended his career of murder. It had been a bad mistake when Brady tried to entangle David Smith, Myra's sixteen year old brother-in-law, in the murder of Edward Evans. Brady wanted to make him an accomplice; instead, he turned him into an informer. Smith was too young and too scared. But the really big mistake was boasting to Smith about earlier murders, and about how he and Myra Hindley had buried the bodies on the moors. For now the police looked through their file of missing people in the Manchester area. There were at least eleven missing persons who *could* have been murdered by Brady. He had told David Smith that he liked to choose his victims in their teens, because the police then assumed they were among the fifteen hundred teenagers who each year run away from home. That opened quite a wide field.

For example, there was Pauline Reade, a sixteen year-old girl who vanished in July, 1963. She had lived in the Gorton district of Manchester, where Brady and Myra Hindley worked, and where they also lived at the time. And apart from missing teenagers, there were several missing children; among them, two twelve year-old boys, Keith Bennett and John Kilbride, and a ten year old girl, Leslie Ann Downey. These children were hardly old enough to have run away to London. Besides, Leslie Ann's mother had consulted the Dutch clairvoyant, Gerald Croiset, who told her that her daughter had definitely been murdered.

In prison, Brady and Myra Hindley were sullen. Myra kept repeating: 'My story's the same as his. Ask him'. They denied everything except the murder of Evans, and even then, Brady insisted that it had been David Smith who struck the first blow. It was obvious that they meant to drag David Smith down with them, if that was possible.

Meanwhile, how could the police begin to locate other possible victims? The moor is a huge, diamond shaped area which separates Lancashire, in the west of England, from Yorkshire in the east. It is mountainous, cold and bleak. If you drive to the top on a clear day, you can look over two grimy, industrialised counties, with their belching factory chimneys and cobbled streets. No human lives up there. Even the sheep that graze are not too happy in the cold mist. The few deserted cottages are without windows or roofs. A body buried on the moor might remain undiscovered for ever.



Still, there were a few leads to go on. David Smith told the police that Brady had taken him up on the moor to practise shooting with a revolver. Smith managed to locate the valley where Brady had fired at an oil drum, and the police started digging. But the task looked hopeless; the ground was a black, soggy peat. It rained more or less continuously, and the mist would descend suddenly and destroy all visibility. At this point, the police found out that Brady and Myra Hindley had been friendly with a twelve year-old girl, Patricia Hodges, who lived two houses away from them, and that they had taken her up to the moors on several occasions for picnics. Patricia was up to the moor when the police search had been going on for a week, and she pointed out a spot some six miles from the place where the police had been digging—a small hill called Hollin Brown Knoll. The searchers and reporters, and the army of curious sightseers switched their attention to this new site.

Even with this clue the chances of locating the victims seemed slight. The moor stretches out desolately in all directions. Police poked sticks into the spongy soil and sniffed the ends for the smell of decomposition. But for twenty four hours, the search yielded no result. Then a police constable strolled to the top of the hill. As he looked down at the grass, he saw what seemed to be a bone sticking up. He called the others. Half an hour of cautious

digging and raking revealed the naked body of a young girl. At her feet, in a bundle, lay her clothes. Later, Mrs. Downey identified the body as that of her daughter, Leslie Ann, who had disappeared a year before.

Another dramatic break in the case was yet to come. The house in Hattersley had revealed very little evidence apart from Evans's body. A detective inspector, making a minute search, found a prayer book belonging to Myra Hindley. Folded down the back was a luggage ticket. It took the police to Manchester Central railroad station, where they recovered two suitcases. Their contents were electrifying. The suitcases contained quantities of pornographic photographs, including nine of Leslie Ann Downey, wearing only a pair of socks, with a scarf tied in her mouth as a gag. There was also a library of pornographic books, including the Marquis De Sade's *Justine*, and some Nazi literature, among which were books about concentration camp atrocities. Most macabre of all among the contents were two tapes, one of which was a recording made while the photographs of Leslie Ann were being taken, and on which she could be heard pleading to be released.

The suitcases also contained some photographic negatives in a tin, and some of these, when developed, showed Myra Hindley at various spots on the moors. In one of them she was holding a small dog, and looking downwards towards the earth. A photographer who saw this photograph thought he recognised a hill in the background. Going to the moor, he walked towards the hill until he thought he was standing on the spot from which the photograph had been taken. He took another photograph himself. When developed, it convinced him that he had found the exact spot where Myra Hindley had been standing. Acting on the photographer's detective work, the police now dug at the suggested spot. A few feet down they found a boy's body in an advanced state of decomposition. Evidence indicated that some form of sexual assault had taken place. He was later identified as twelve year-old John Kilbride, who had vanished in November 1963.

The discovery of John Kilbride was the last piece of evidence to be unearthed against the killers. The search went on for another year—even after the murderers had been convicted. But nothing more was found. It seems unlikely that there ever will be. Brady, of course, denied knowing anything about the murders of Leslie Downey, and John Kilbride. He admitted to taking the nude photographs of Leslie, but claimed she had been brought to

the house by David Smith and another man, and that she had been taken away by Smith. He flatly denied all knowledge of John Kilbride. The photograph of Myra Hindley looking at the grave was, he said, pure coincidence. He did not expect anyone to believe him. He just refused to co-operate.



The key to this whole strange case lies in Ian Brady. He was born in a slum district of Glasgow's Clydeside, a shipbuilding area, in 1938. His mother was a 19 year-old waitress called Maggie Stewart. The child was illegitimate.

This may be the first clue to Brady's sullen and violent temperament. Scotland is still one of the few countries in Europe where a puritanical religious outlook makes illegitimacy a serious business. This was true even in the Glasgow slums. Brady was born with a reason for feeling 'outside' society.

He grew up against the sooty, disease-ridden background of Glasgow slums, living in a crowded tenement house with paper thin walls. His mother had no time for him; he was brought up by a neighbour with three children of her own. There exists a school photograph of him at about the age of seven. He is a not unattractive little boy, with a small, turned down mouth, and he scowls seriously into the camera with his arms behind his back. None of his companions are smiling; they are an amusingly tough-looking bunch who look as if they've been selected for the cast of a *Dead End Kids* film. It is interesting to compare this with a school photograph that exists of Myra Hindley. Everyone is smiling happily, including Myra, who looks a pleasant, open-faced girl. The photograph somehow conveys an atmosphere of cheerfulness and respectability.

Ian Brady was not a tough little boy. On the contrary, he was a bookworm from the beginning. His taste in reading was not particularly highbrow—*Superman* comic books and lurid gangster paperbacks that cashed in on the then current popularity of *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*, with plenty of scenes of sadism and violent rape. Academically, Brady was above average, and after the age of eleven, he went to Shawlands Academy, a school whose pupils were mostly in a far higher income bracket than Brady's foster mother. Since the war, Shawlands—an 'upper class' school—had taken brilliant students from the Glasgow slums. This experience might have been a good one if Brady had been the

type to become popular in the school. He was not. Mixing with the children of the well-to-do produced a feeling of furious resentment in him. He began to express it by committing thefts, and then burglaries. At 13, he was caught housebreaking, and put on probation for two years. A year later he was in court again for burglary. More probation. At sixteen, caught housebreaking yet again, he asked for nine other burglaries to be taken into account. All this thieving was not merely a desire to get things the easy way. It was his expression of resentment at a world that had never given him anything. He was going to take what he believed was his due.

When he was seventeen, he moved to Manchester, where his mother now lived with her husband, Patrick Brady, whose name Ian adopted. (Until now, he had been called Sloan, after his foster mother.) His mother and her husband were living in a slum area close to Grey Mare Lane Market; the husband worked as a market porter. Ian took a heavy labouring job with a brewery. They both worked half the night, and slept half the day. Ian's mother now doted on the good looking youth, but Ian was not demonstrative. He was quiet, introverted, and liable to blush when anyone spoke to him. He still spent most of his free time with a book in his hands. A few months later, he was in trouble again, charged with stealing lead from the brewery where he worked. This time he was sent to an approved school for a year.

This must have struck him as the last straw, the final humiliation heaped upon him by a society that he detested. He might have a criminal record, but he was no ordinary juvenile delinquent. He was a loner, a thinker, with little in common with the loud-mouthed toughs in the approved school. He came out after a year, more silent than ever. Now he began to drink heavily, usually alone, spending his wages on cheap wine. And it may have been about this time that his hero ceased to be Al Capone, and became Adolf Hitler. Everything about civilisation struck Brady as rotten. Hitler was a man who had recognised this and tried to change it.

When Brady was eighteen, his family moved into an even dirtier slum off the Stockport Road. He always looked well dressed and neat, as if to emphasise his detachment from his broken-down surroundings, and the local girls found this taciturn youth intriguing. But he was full of hatred and frustration; he felt he was trapped in a dead end. Bottles of cheap wine and Nazi literature were his chief consolation.

When he left the approved school at eighteen, he joined his step-

father as a market porter. In 1959, he decided it was time to look for something better, and found a job as a stock clerk at Millward's Merchandising Company, a chemical firm in Gorton, Manchester. He was still working there two years later when a nineteen year-old girl called Myra Hindley joined the firm as a typist.

Myra Hindley and Ian Brady had one important factor in common. Both of them had been farmed out when young because their mothers were working. The zoologist Konrad Lorenz, has pointed out that if young animals do not receive affection in babyhood, they cease to need it, and become permanently incapable of any relationship, involving 'give and take'. They can only take; they have nothing to give. It seems probable that this was the fundamental factor that turned Ian Brady and Myra Hindley into sadists and murderers.

And yet no one who knew Myra Hindley in her childhood or teens would have believed her to be maladjusted. She had been brought up in Gorton by her grandmother, who lived just around the corner from her mother. She was a cheerful, intelligent girl, a good athlete, fond of children and animals, known locally as a tomboy. Everyone in the street liked her. At sixteen, she saw one of her friends drowned in the canal, and became intensely religious. She became a Catholic convert and attended church regularly. But she remained a happy, popular girl. Rather heavily built, not very pretty, people thought of her as 'a good sort'.

In February, 1961, she joined Millwards, and met Ian Brady. To say she 'met' him is perhaps an overstatement. She had to type stock lists at his dictation; but he ignored her completely—at least, as completely as was possible in a small office with only three people. Brady's personality was now completely fixed. He was the lone wolf, and thought of himself as an intellectual. He was disliked by his fellow workers because of his sullen temper, and his tendency to fly into a rage and shout bad language when he was crossed. He spent much of his time reading the lives of eminent Nazis, and studying the ideas of the Marquis De Sade. He thought of the 'divine Marquis' as the Master, and *Justine* became a kind of Bible. Like De Sade, Brady was an atheist. And, like De Sade, he agreed that society is run by rogues, villains and hypocrites who preach morality to keep the poor quiet. The law of life, said De Sade, is really the law of the jungle. The really intelligent man pretends to conform, and sets out to take all he can get.

The problem was, how to out-cheat society? Brady dreamed of becoming rich through robberies—but they would have to be so carefully planned that there would be no risk of being caught. In the meantime, he tried to increase his income of £12 a week by gambling. He was far from being a born gambler. He would work out complicated bets so that it would be impossible to lose, but equally impossible to win very much.

So for the first month or two, he felt no interest in the blond, adoring girl with the Lancashire accent. She struck him as too clean and healthy. Admittedly, her rather heavy build was not unlike some of the wardresses in the concentration camps. But he disliked the way she dressed in flirty, teenage clothes with short skirts, and the way she plastered her face with make up in an effort to be seductive.

But he could not hold out forever. He had to see her every day, and her adoration was flattering. ('She set her cap at Ian from the beginning' said a workmate.) After two months, he allowed himself to warm to her. He took her out to public houses and talked to her about Hitler and De Sade. It pleased him to see how easily he could make her see things his way. Her religious convictions collapsed in the face of his contemptuous onslaught, and she stopped going to church. It was intoxicating to mould her into his own creature.

The central facts about this relationship have never emerged; but there are enough clues to allow us to reconstruct them. For example, there is a sentence in one of David Smith's notebooks that seems to be a quotation from Brady: 'Everyone is either a sadist or a masochist'. We know that Ian Brady had been brought up on sadistic gangster literature in which the virtuous girls always get ravished, and usually beaten up as well. We know he graduated from this to De Sade's *Justine*, a long epic about a 'virtuous girl' who is tortured and humiliated from beginning to end. We also know that Brady fed his day-dreams of rape and torture with pornographic photographs.

What seems equally clear is that Brady's relationship to Myra Hindley was that of a sadist to a masochist. Their sexual relationship was anything but 'normal'. When questioned by the police, she sharply denied that they had ever lived together 'as man and wife'. This is borne out by the fact that, in Wardle Brook Avenue, she slept upstairs and he slept in the sitting room. And yet they certainly derived some strange pleasure from one another's company. There is a widely circulated story that Brady owned a

Nazi type uniform. Myra certainly treasured a photograph of the wife of a concentration camp commandant who had lampshades made of human skin. The two of them probably entered into some strange fantasy relation in which he was the torturer, she the victim. She was in love with him—she said so in court—but he never admitted to loving her. His feeling for her was not love; she was necessary to him because she was completely dominated by him. She was the first person who had made him feel that he was not a shy, ineffectual brooder. His total conquest of her was the second great turning point in his life. The first had been the approved school.

It also seems likely that Myra Hindley was Brady's first model when he decided to enter into the pornographic photograph business himself. But soon he decided that there had to be other models.

It is true that all this is speculation. But it is certainly supported by facts. In June, 1963, two years after meeting her, Brady moved into Myra Hindley's house in Gorton. The only other person in the house was Myra's grandmother, now an invalid. One month later, sixteen year-old Pauline Reade, who also lived in the Gorton district, vanished on her way to a dance. Her fate is still unknown.

Less than six months after that, in November, 1963, John Kilbride vanished on a Saturday afternoon. He was last seen at the market at Ashton under Lyne. On that day, Myra Hindley hired a small car . . .

Another six months—June, 1964—and Keith Bennett, age 12, vanished on his way to visit his grandmother, who lived nearby. It may have been coincidence that he vanished in the Longsight district of Manchester, where Brady had lived for several years with his mother and stepfather. Myra had bought her own car, a second-hand Morris, a month before Keith Bennett's disappearance.

Several other things happened in 1964. In August, Myra's sister Maureen married David Smith. Smith was only 16. Both he and Maureen had met Brady briefly, but Brady had ignored them. Now he became flatteringly interested in David Smith—especially when he learned that the youth had a police record. Smith had been on probation for burglary, and had also been in court twice charged with assault. Besides, Smith was intelligent and literate—as is shown by the extracts from his journals read out in court—and quickly came under Brady's influence as completely as Myra Hindley. Brady again experienced the intoxica-

tion of moulding a young mind, introducing him to the works of De Sade and his favourite Nazi heroes.

In September, 1964, Myra Hindley and her grandmother moved to the house in Hattersley, and Brady moved in with them. The house seems to have been taken in the grandmother's name. It was a move away from the slums—this was an 'overspill' housing estate, designed for workers of low income. It was about seven miles from their work in Gorton. But it was only a short distance from the moors.

Smith and Brady began to see a great deal of one another. And one evening, when they consumed several bottles of Spanish wine, Brady voiced the project at the back of his mind: that they should rob a bank together. Smith, completely under Brady's influence, agreed. Brady had managed to get hold of two revolvers, and now the two of them spent hours together planning the robbery.



On Christmas Eve, 1964, Brady and Myra Hindley took their twelve year-old neighbour, Patricia Hodges up to the moor. They parked near the spot where John Kilbride was buried, and all drank wine. The killers experienced a strange excitement near the body of their victim. When they took Patricia Hodges home—towards midnight—they packed a blanket, and drove back to the moor, to spend the night sleeping near John Kilbride's grave. No one knows what took place between them on that freezing December night, but when they returned to Wardle Brook Avenue the next morning, they had decided that it was time to add another murder to their scrapbook of memories.

The next day, December 26, Leslie Ann Downey left her home in the afternoon to go to a nearby fair. What happened then can be roughly reconstructed from the evidence. Some time shortly after six o'clock, Leslie met Brady and Myra Hindley, and was somehow persuaded to get into their car with them—perhaps they offered her a lift home. She was driven back to the house in Wardle Brook Avenue, which was empty—Myra's grandmother went to visit relatives every second Saturday. Leslie was taken up to Myra's room and ordered to undress. Brady switched on the hidden tape recorder. When the child protested, Brady squeezed her neck until she agreed. He told her reassuringly: 'We only want to take a few photographs. The sooner you let us take them, the sooner you can go home. The frightened child burst into tears,

and Myra's voice on the tape snaps: 'Hush; shut up or I'll forget myself and hit you one'. Later, when the police played this tape back to her, Myra bowed her head and said: 'I am ashamed'.

No one knows how Leslie died, or when. There were no marks on the body to indicate strangling. The scarf tied round her face may have suffocated her. Or—more likely—Brady may have suffocated her with the pillow.

Myra was due to go and pick up her grandmother at half past eight. She arrived late, at eleven, and told the old lady that there was too much snow on the roads to risk driving her home. Ignoring her protests, she left and drove back home, leaving her grandmother to sleep on an improvised bed on the floor. She returned for her at ten o'clock the next morning. By that time, Leslie Downey's body was also in a moorland grave, a few hundred yards from John Kilbride's.

Early in 1965, Brady decided it was time that David Smith learned how to use a gun. He started taking the youth up to the moors for shooting practice, choosing a lonely valley. And the indoctrination in sadism continued. David Smith's conversation became little more than an echo of Brady's. Smith decided to write a book, and filled several notebooks with ideas. 'Rape is not a crime, it is a state of mind. Murder is a hobby and supreme pleasure'. 'God is a superstition, a cancer which eats into the brain'. 'People are like maggots, small, blind and worthless'.

In July the Smiths moved out to Hattersley, into the block of flats near Wardle Brook Avenue. David Smith was out of work, and Maureen was pregnant, so it became important to him to bring their robbery plans to a head. Brady watched his increasing impatience with satisfaction. He set him to watching the bank for hours every day, noticing everyone who went in and out.

On September 25th, Brady made his first major mistake. He told David Smith that he had already murdered 'three or four people', and that they were buried on the moor. But it was obvious that Smith only half believed him. Brady decided there was only one way to convince him.

On October 5th, 1965, David Smith was told to bring his own library of pornography to Wardle Brook Avenue. He brought fourteen books, wrapped in brown paper, and Brady packed them in a suitcase. In another suitcase were packed the photographs of Leslie Downey, and the tape recording of her protests, as well as Brady's own library of De Sade. Brady and Myra drove off to deposit the cases in the Central station.

Now everything was prepared. The next day, between nine and eleven in the evening, Brady and Myra Hindley wandered around Manchester public houses, looking for a victim. They met seventeen year-old Edward Evans, and drew him into conversation. At closing time Brady suggested that they return to Wardle Brook Avenue to open a bottle of wine. Evans readily agreed.

The stage was now set, Brady had a hatchet concealed in the living room. Myra Hindley was sent off to fetch the man for whose benefit this was being staged—David Smith. She arrived at the flats at half-past eleven, and talked for ten minutes to Maureen, on the pretext of a message that Maureen was to pass on to their mother. Then she got up to leave, and asked Smith to walk back home with her, saying that the unlighted streets made her nervous. Smith put on his clothes—he had undressed for bed—and left the flat, taking his stick with him. At the end of Wardle Brook Avenue, he said goodnight, but Myra said: 'Ian's got some miniature wine bottles for you. You might as well pick them up while you're here'. Smith agreed. 'Just hang on a minute here'. Myra said, opening the back door, 'and I'll just see what Ian's doing. I'll blink the landing light twice if it's all right to come in'. Smith was used to their vagaries, and he understood the reason—to discourage casual visitors. So he waited outside in the cold. A moment later, the light blinked, and Brady came to the door.

'Is it the wine bottle you want?' he asked loudly, as if he wanted to reassure somebody who could overhear them. He led the way into the kitchen, pointed to the bottles on a shelf, and went out quickly. Only a few seconds later, there was a loud scream. At the same time, Myra rushed into the kitchen shouting: 'Dave, help him'. Smith ran to the sitting room, and saw Brady, an upraised hatchet in his hands, standing over a man on the settee. Amazingly enough, the man on the settee was fighting, and continued to fight as Brady hit him with the hatchet. He fell on the floor, and lashed out with his foot, giving Brady a kick on the ankle. Smith said later: 'Brady was hitting him . . . They were heavy blows, but they were not aimed in a frenzy. They were almost positioned. The hatchet rose and fell fourteen times. Finally, Evans lay still, and Brady tied a cord round his throat to make sure he was dead. All the time he had been hitting Evans, Brady had been shouting obscenities. And yet he looked curiously calm about it all. He stared down at the dead body and said in a matter of fact voice: 'That's it'. He looked around the room, which had many splashes of blood, and said to Myra: 'Get some soapy water and old

clothes'. He wiped his hand on a piece of cloth, lit a cigarette, and poured two glasses of wine from a bottle on the table. He held one out to Smith.

'Here, have a drink'.

Smith felt more like vomiting, but he was now suddenly afraid for his own life. He knew too much. It was important to seem unmoved. So he took the glass and took a swallow. Brady seemed pleased with himself. He handed Smith the hatchet and said conversationally: 'Feel the weight of that . . . I was amazed. It should only take one blow'. Myra came back in with a bucket, and Brady asked her if she thought anyone had heard the screams.

'Yes, my gran. I told her I'd dropped my tape recorder on my toe'.

She spread a blanket and a sheet of polythene on the floor. 'Give us a lift with this', Brady said, nodding at the body. Smith helped them lift it into the blanket. Brady joked: 'Eddie's a dead weight', and laughed aloud.

Brady was limping badly as they carried the body upstairs. He explained: 'That bloody queer kicked my ankle'. They left the body in Myra's bedroom, then went downstairs and cleaned the room, while Myra went out and made tea. Half an hour later, they sat around sipping tea, and Myra and Brady made conversation as if nothing had happened. 'You should have seen the look in his eyes as you hit him', Myra said, looking at Brady with admiration. Brady smiled modestly. He explained to Smith: 'I came up behind him and hit him'. He explained that Evans was a homosexual who had made indecent advances to him. He failed to explain why Evans had chosen to do this in front of Myra Hindley'

Finally, Smith said casually: 'Well, I may as well be getting along now'. To his amazement, Brady agreed immediately. Smith ran all the way home. When he got back into his own flat, he rushed to the toilet to vomit. His wife went and made tea. Then Smith sat down and poured out his story.

And so, at six o'clock the following morning, the two of them tiptoed downstairs, to the nearest telephone box. Smith refused to leave the safety of the police station until he knew that Brady was safely in police custody, and that the body had been found.

It was really Edward Evans who brought Brady and Myra Hindley to justice. If he had not kicked Brady's ankle, he would have been buried in a moorland grave a few hours after his murder. And the police might still be searching for his body in

four hundred square miles of empty land.



On the following May 6th, the judge pronounced sentences that probably guarantee that neither of the killers will ever see the outside of a prison again. That was the end of the case. A few weeks later, a small news item stated that Myra Hindley had been moved into solitary confinement for her own protection; the other prisoners seemed likely to subject her to violence.

And yet the case has left a question mark. In fact, many question marks. To begin with, how many did they actually kill? Leslie Downey died on 26 December, 1964. Edward Evans was killed in the following October. When he was boasting to Smith, Brady declared that he 'had another three months to go before the next one', and then added that he would 'do another soon, but that wouldn't count'. If, in fact, Brady was responsible for the deaths of Pauline Reade and Keith Bennett as well as those of John Kilbride and Leslie Downey, he seems to have worked on a principle of committing a murder every six months. Was there another victim in June or July, 1965?

The final question is the most disturbing of all. What happened to Myra Hindley to change her from a child lover to a child killer? Was she always a masochist, whose hidden nature was revealed to her by Ian Brady? Or—far more frightening—could Brady have done the same with *any* girl who had fallen under his influence? Or with any dissatisfied youth like David Smith? In his own quiet and dangerous way, Brady seems to have some of the powers of his idol, Hitler.

It is most charitable to believe that, under Brady's influence, Myra Hindley became insane. She certainly had the ability of the insane to keep her ideas in watertight compartments, and ignore anything that conflicted with them. Her dog Puppet died under anaesthetic when the police were trying to determine his age from his teeth. When told about it, Myra screamed: 'You're just a lot of ——— murderers'.

Apart from Brady's remark about Evans being a dead weight, it seems to have been the only touch of humour in the case.

The Subtle Death

CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

I WAS on late patrol that day (said Constable Thorpe). My beat has been George Street and thereabouts these good few years past, a nice district where I know everybody.

In one of the side streets there used to be a sort of experimental laboratory. It was no great shakes, but they did a lot of analytical work—that is, Parder, the chap who put the money in the business and Collett, the brains of the show, a little, nervous chap.

Parder was a gay bachelor. He had money in quite a few places, and plenty in his pocket. It wasn't so with Collett—he was always broke, but he had a pretty wife and a nice little kiddie out Harrow way. I knew Mrs. Collett well.

With the export drive on, the laboratory got really busy—Government work and things like that. Collett had a couple of assistants, both from Glasgow. One was a red-head named McKie, the other was Sandy Clark, a dapper little man.

That day I'm talking about I was passing the laboratory. Parder was on the top step, a red-faced chap with a fierce look—the type women fancy. He was arguing like mad with Collett.

"Then we'll split the partnership," I heard Parder say. "It's my money. You can get out."

"I see." Collett spoke very low. "You would say that, wouldn't you! It just isn't going to work out that way. We've got the Bristol job to finish; I'm a chemist; the country needs help, and if I have to run this place alone, we'll complete the Bristol job."

Parder paused. He was thinking about money; he had that look on his face.

"All right," he said at length. "That one job, then. After that you can clear out." After this he strode off.

Collett didn't take any notice of me, but Clark did. He came down the steps two minutes after Collett had gone. "Hullo, Constable. Stinking row, wasn't there?"

"Yes, I heard a bit of it, sir. Breaking up, it seems?"

"That's putting it nicely. Thorpe, keep an eye on this place,

will you? I've got a feeling in my bones."

"A feeling, sir; what sort of a one?"

"That's more than I can explain to an unbelieving policeman," Clark grinned. "You take the word of a seventh son of a seventh son. Do it as a favour, will you?"

I couldn't do much less, but it wasn't easy to hover round the laboratory in an unobtrusive fashion. I came back several times before my relief was due, and just about six something happened right enough.

I saw McKie and Parder standing in front of an open window upstairs, talking earnestly. They disappeared into the room. The silence got on my nerves after a while. There wasn't anything different that I could see, but something was wrong. In the end I went up the laboratory steps and McKie himself answered my ring, looking a bit puzzled when he saw me.

"What's wrong, old chap—want Clark?"

"No, sir." I stood there, at a loss for words as they say in books. "Pardon me pushing in like this, sir—but is everything all right?"

"Well . . ." McKie laughed. "Look here, what is wrong with you? Want to come and have a look, or something?" He was puzzled. I think . . . "Won't be happy till you come in, will you? Come in then,—that's an official invitation!"



I followed him up the stairs to the first floor. I'd been in the laboratory before. There were three rooms, the major part of the place being the room in the front, where I'd seen the two talking.

Collett was bending over some sort of instrument in a back room and never even looked up at me. The next room, a sort of office, was empty, but the laboratory wasn't. Parder was curled up on the floor. It didn't take half an eye to see he was dead.

First of all I took a personal look round. I knew that Mr. Bennett—our Divisional Chief Inspector of C.I.D.—would have to be told. He's good, but he isn't easy on the nerves.

"I'll have to ask you for statements," I said, making it as gentle as I could. "First, how did he die?"

They were unanimous about that. It seems it was poison, but Clark, the coolest of them all, couldn't understand it. "There's nothing poisonous that's unlocked, Thorpe; look, that red cupboard's where we keep it—see?" I did see. It was locked up

tight.

I knew Parder hadn't been dead long. Without touching him I had a good look. There was just one thing that struck me. He'd been smoking. There was a half burnt cigarette on the floor, and a packet of gaspers on the work-bench.

Now I knew for a fact that Collett wouldn't have smoking in there, which, on the face of it, made things seem a bit queer.

I didn't say anything, but looked at Collett. He was having an attack of nerves.

"For heaven's sake don't look at me like that, Thorpe! I know we quarrelled, and wouldn't you? He's been hanging round my wife—and he's got a way with him." He stopped, making a sort of face.

I turned them all out of the laboratory and delved round a bit for myself. Without touching them, I had a good peep at the cigarettes, even sniffing at the packet—that's when I got the clue.

There wasn't much time left before I had to ring Mr. Bennett, so I thought pretty quick. In the end I decided to take a chance.

Collett came in at my call from the door. I suppose I looked grave; he turned a sort of green.

"Know who left those cigarettes in here, sir? I know Mr. Parder was a pretty steady smoker, and I also know you don't hold with smoking in this room"—then I took pity on him—"and I don't mind telling you they're Mrs. Collett's, sir. I know her perfume, and that packet smells of it. Like to confide anything in me, sir?"

Collett began a circumstantial story about the fate of the laboratory, Parder messing about with his wife, but before he got very far Clark burst in, thrusting him aside.

"You shut up, John—I did it, and you know it!" He turned to me, holding out his hands. "All right, Thorpe; you can take me. The Colletts are my best friends. I heard that rat talking to John, and when I found those fags in the next room it gave me an idea. I was going to get Parder before one of these other idiots ran their necks in a noose—"

It might've been funny under any other conditions, for in comes McKie, and I'm blowed if he didn't start confessing, too! They started a first-class row, right there over the corpse, as to who did it. It was McKie who suddenly let out a shriek like a madman. He was pointing to a kind of retort.

"What's that?" He ran across and took a sniff, then he whirled round. "It's trichlorethylene! Who's been using it?"

"It's only a spirit for—"

But McKie grabbed his elbow, pointing to the cigarette by Parder.

"John, you fool—you crazy fool! Don't you see?" He began to shake. "Thorpe, nobody's done it! The stuff in there—well, it's too complicated to explain, but we've warned Parder against smoking—he isn't a chemist. He was in here on his own and must've lit a quick one. I remember the packet lying on the bench." He grabbed my arm. "Don't you know? He's a nosey bird. Thorpe, if he'd've bent over that trichlorethylene puffing his gasper the inhalation would turn the fumes into phosgene gas! He must've taken a huge whiff to pass out as quickly as that!"

And so it proved. The inquest concurred, and there was a verdict of 'Accidental death.' Those three chaps bought the laboratory cheap from Parder's executors, and that's about the truth of it.

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YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE

MICHAEL ARLEN

Armenian born Michael Arlen (1895-1956) was one of the most successful authors of his time; occasionally he would write a crime story, this being in his typically deft style

AT TEN O'CLOCK one evening there was not, in the considered opinion of the famous amateur golfer Johnnie ('Jock') Winterset, a more happily married man, a prouder father, and a more contented husband than Jock Winterset.

By ten fifteen of the same evening it was, in an emphatic and moving statement he made to his wife Stella, established beyond all doubt that there was not in all the United Kingdom a man, husband, and father lower down in the scale of happiness than poor Jock Winterset.

Preparing to leave the house in the grand manner, his parting words to Stella, touched with the dignity of melancholy self-criticism, were also in the grand manner. For Jock Winterset, surprisingly enough in an Englishman with a good eye for a ball, could speak English with reasonable facility, if not perhaps quite fluently.

As a youth he had been a martyr to the grunting habit, a malady which annually claims innumerable victims in England and America, but he had outgrown this. In due course he had mastered all the better-known labials and vowel sounds, and had even won a certain reputation among grunters as an able speech-maker in his triumphant career as Captain of the School, a Blue, a Walker Cup player, and Amateur Champion (twice).

He said to Stella: "You have let me live in a fool's paradise for the nine years of our married life. I thought you loved me. I thought, like a fathead, that you were even proud of me sometimes."

He said: "I realize now that you have been acting and pretending all the time—out of pity, not to hurt my feelings. I have never loved anyone but you, Stella—anyway, not since I met you. But you tell me I love only myself."

He said: "I know I'm not clever. I know I'm no good at anything except games. But I'm not fool enough to think that there can be any happiness in a marriage when—when the teamwork has broken down—that is, when a fellow's wife tells him in so many words that she has no respect for him at all."

He said: "I shall have to think this out, Stella. We have to think above all of our boy. I am going now, and——"

"You were going," Stella pointed out, "anyway." Then, quite unlike herself, she suddenly giggled. "Just suppose you missed the eleven ten at Euston—then some other big thinker would win the North of England Championship tomorrow."

"I don't suppose," he said bitterly, "that I shall even qualify, with this on my mind."

"Why not?" said Stella with surprise. "Just think of nothing but the ball. You'll find it quite easy, since you have thought of nothing else for the nine years we've been married"

Whereupon Jock Winterset, forgetting all about the grand manner, picked up his small suitcase and large bag of clubs, and banged out of the house into the waiting taxi.

"Ever heard," he said savagely to the taxi-driver, "of lightning?"

"Yessir. My missus uses it regular on our Bill. It works wunnerful."

"Go," said Jock with restraint, "like lightning in the general direction of Euston Station."

He had ample time, in point of fact. But his nerves called for hurry, speed.

His thoughts sped faster than the taxi. The row with Stella had arisen from an argument about their son Gerald, then just on seven years old. Jerry had been laid up the last day or so with a slightly cut finger which had become inflamed.

Jock had suggested—casually, not dreaming of any opposition—that young Jerry should start taking golf lessons from a good professional as soon as his finger was better. "My father," he

said, "had me learn the feel of a club when I was Jerry's age, and I have never regretted it."

"Yes, dear," said Stella. She was knitting.

"In fact," said Jock, "that's what made me."

"Yes, dear," said Stella.

She was slender and dark-haired, with wide, grey, thoughtful eyes. She was much loved by her friends, and silly people were rather frightened of her.

"There's nothing," said Jock, "like learning to swing a club in a natural way when you're a kid. Like the caddies."

"Jerry," said Stella, going on knitting, "isn't going to be a caddy."

"You know what I mean, Stella. A really first-class amateur—someone who might win the Open. Golly, I'd be proud if a son of mine——"

"Ours, dear," said Stella.

"Of course, darling. But wouldn't it be marvellous if Jerry were really in the top class? You can see now that he's got a pretty good eye, and——"

Stella put down her knitting and looked up at him. She did this very deliberately, and suddenly Jock felt uncomfortable. For a second he could not understand why. Then he realized uneasily that a stranger, cold and unfamiliar, was measuring him from the depths of the wide grey eyes he knew so well.

"It is time I told you something, Jock. Perhaps I should have told you before, but I have been trying not to hurt your feelings. Jerry—our son—is not going to take golf lessons now. In due course he is going to learn how to play golf and tennis and other games in the normal undistinguished way, and when he grows up he is going to play them—I hope—in the normal undistinguished way.

"He is not going to play golf or tennis like a first-class amateur. I do not want our son to be a first-class amateur but a tenth-class amateur. Or eleventh-class. That will be much better for him and his character.

"For I hope that our son will grow up to be a reasonably thoughtful, hard-working young man who will be able to get a decent job for himself on his own merits and not because other good chaps admire him because he is plus three.

"Also, I hope that in due course he will be able to support a wife and children with his own work, and not with the money his dear proud old daddy gives him because he can regularly

break seventy at Addington. And that reminds me, Jock, that you had better play your best tomorrow. The quarter's rent is due very soon and if your dear proud old daddy doesn't stump up once again——"

Jock, sitting taut in the whirling taxi, could not remember what he had said then. He had been too shocked, too bewildered, too astounded, too flummoxed. He had always thought that she had taken their occasional financial troubles gaily—like a good sport—the way he had.

It was only gradually that the real meaning of her words had penetrated his bewildered mind. So she didn't want Jerry to be like his father. She wanted their son to be like anyone else *but* his father. She wanted Jerry to be a decent, hard-working man whom she could respect. That meant she didn't respect him, Jock, and never had. That meant . . .

Whereupon he had made his farewell speech in the grand manner.



As the taxi crossed Tottenham Court Road on the final lap to Euston, he realized bitterly that in some things she was right but that in the main ones she was wrong. He saw that he ought not to have given up so much time—so many weekdays as well as weekends—to golf. He saw that he ought to have done better for himself than be just a half-commission man in a broker's office.

But that hadn't really been all his fault. Everybody had always been so nice to him, made things easy for him, let him in on the inside of good market rises. Of course, Stella had been disappointed recently when he had refused the job of being manager and steward of Lord Teale's estate in Northumberland. She had wanted to bring up Jerry in the country, far from London. The job had been right down his street, too. Good money, comfortable house and grounds rent free, first-class horses, this and that—but an all-week job, day by day, with only a weekend here and there for golf. He couldn't be expected to keep up his game with only a day's golf here and there. It wasn't reasonable. After all, you only live once.

And what about love? What marks did Stella give him there? What about a chap being a good husband? A jolly good husband. Considerate to all. Very little to drink. Never a fling. Not

like some fellows he knew.

Not by a long chalk like some fellows he knew. Always offered to take Stella with him to Le Touquet for the Buck's and White's weekends, even though she hadn't lately come with him. In fact, he'd been on the up-and-up from dawn till dusk for nearly ten years.

And was she glad? Was she grateful?

She was so thumping glad and grateful that she had landed him such a resounding sock on the jaw that he'd never be the same man again. Anyway, not to her. Not likely.

He'd start batting an eye around now. He'd bat two. He'd hit the high spots, he'd hit the hot spots. Like other chaps. There wasn't any lack of high-stepping Snow Whites who didn't despise a man just because he had been Amateur Champion. Not likely.

The taxi curved into Gordon Square. It curved spiritedly, and the front left wheel crashed smartly into the rear of a large handsome car at the curb, parked too near the corner. The taxi, rocking enormously bounced indignantly sideways and stood shuddering.

Jock found himself, he didn't in the least know how, crouching on his hands and knees in the middle of the road. He must have jumped out. He was crouching intently, like a man about to sprint, a ridiculous position.

Stunned, but quite unhurt, blinking at the lamplight, he took in the half-wrecked taxi, which somehow looked idiotically proud of itself at still being on all four wheels. Then he took in the taxi-driver, also apparently unhurt and still at the wheel, looking around him with an air of profound astonishment. And then he saw his bag of clubs, also spilled on the road near him.

That decided him. He'd go while the going was good. Or he'd never catch his train. It was the work of a moment to snap at the still astonished and speechless driver to go back to his house for payment of his fare, snatch up his suitcase and golf-bag, and leg it towards the station.

Lucky it hadn't been worse. A nice thing it would have been to have to scratch from tomorrow's fixture. He could see the newspapers.

**JOCK WINTERSET HURT IN TAXI CRASH
EX-AMATEUR CHAMPION BADLY INJURED
MAY NEVER PLAY GOLF AGAIN**

Thanks a lot, he thought. Thank you, God.

Glancing back over his shoulder, he saw a small crowd already around the taxi-driver, who appeared to be addressing them indignantly. Then he turned into the brightly lit Euston Road, just opposite Euston Station.

If anyone had told Jock Winterset that something called his subconscious mind could govern his actions, he would have thought his leg was being pulled in some tiresome, highbrow way. But it could have been only his subconscious mind which made him do what he now did, for it was done without any previous deliberation. As he hurried under the archway to Euston Station he suddenly slewed right round and strode back towards the Euston Road.

He wasn't going to catch that train or any train. His mind had suddenly been made up for him. And he wasn't going to play golf tomorrow. Just like that.

Putting his suitcase and clubs down at a corner, he waited for a passing taxi. One soon came. He was going straight back home to Stella. Straight back—bungo.

That taxi accident had been a sign. He hadn't been hurt, but it had been a sign, all right. It had been the writing on the wall, and the writing had said: *Go back home*. And so he was going back home.

Providence had tipped him the wink, and no mistake. No use kidding himself. Providence had seen him leave Stella in anger, had aimed a shrewd blow at his taxi, thrown him out on his ear, and had tipped him off in so many words to leg it back to Stella and tell her that he, J. Winterset, had forgotten to thank her for all the love and care and unselfishness she had expended during their married lives, in taking care of him and their son.

And what had he done all these years but sit back and admire himself and wait for her to admire him? Had he ever—sincerely, deep down in himself—given thanks for his undeserved good fortune in being married to a dear companion, a good wife, an unselfish mother, and a beautiful woman? No, sir. All he'd done had been to take everything in his stride, for granted, as his right.

Sitting in the taxi, he felt very cool and calm. He seemed to stand at an open window and watch himself walking outside, walking down the years since he had left school as Captain of Cricket, Captain of the Fifteen, head school-prefect, and Captain of the School. A good man, Winterset. Sound chap, Jock. For he's a jolly good fellow.

And he had been Captain of the School ever since: never failing to say 'sir' to his elders or superiors with the proper inflection of respect mingled with man-to-man good-humour; always considerate to his inferiors in that brusque smiling way which takes for granted that lesser men will forgive you for making exacting demands on them; always ready to throw a word of praise to a fag who had done well; always good-humouredly expecting ordinary daily chores to be done for him by people who would only be too glad to do them for him; always a little remote and isolated in even the most intimate companionship—in fact, the Captain of the School. That is, neither boy nor man.

Neither boy nor man.

He understood now why he had so often caught Stella looking at him with a kind of puzzled thoughtfulness. She had been thinking, 'Neither boy nor man. How am I to live my life out with someone who is neither? What shall we talk about as we grow older? Shall we always talk, as we do now, of games and who-will-beat-whom and competitive trivialities and why-can't-we-putt-like-the-Americans?'

'He is a dear and kind man, and I love him, but I can't trust him to be a responsible man and I can't rely on him to teach his son anything of the responsibilities of life. He will be happy as long as he has got fags around him, and he will always be kind to his fags. Poor Jock, he is going to be so unhappy one day when his fags suddenly turn on him. I am head-fag, and I must try my hardest never to turn on him, as he will be so hurt.'

Well, she had tried her hardest, dear Stella, and she had broken down for the first time only that evening—after nine years.

And hadn't he been hurt? Crumbs, he'd nearly taken the count. Just because the fag had dared to speak her mind to the Captain of the School without man-to-man good humour.

A minute or two more, and he'd fix all that. He was going to take that job of old Teale's, which he knew was still open. From now on he would earn his own keep and he would play golf like normal busy men played golf, not sacrificing their lives to it. Then he realized that it was a long time since he had seen Stella smile with all her heart. He could see her dear grey eyes light up and the happiness ripple and flash across her sensitive often too-serious face.

Only a few minutes later Jock was laughing bitterly to himself about these thoughts, these dreams. There was no one to hear

him laugh. Stella had gone out. All dressed up and fit to kill in her best evening frock, Stella had been about to go out when he arrived back unexpectedly. There was a young man with her, a pleasant athletic-looking young fellow called Guy something, and they were standing around in the sitting-room like people waiting for a taxi.

Stella's surprise at his unexpected return was no more than casual.

"Jock, you missed the train!"

He stared. She looked lovely in that white frock, with her dark hair curled severely back.

"Yes," he said. "Just."

"But how? You allowed yourself plenty of time."

"My taxi." He fumbled. "Caught a wing in another wheel—argument, and so on—and here I am." He warmed to his story. Well, it was a good let-out. "I left him still arguing—he will be round tomorrow for his fare."

"Bad luck," she said.

A taxi stopped outside.

"Here's our cab," said the pleasant youth. "Want to dress and join us later, Winterset?"

Stella picked up her little white bag. The small S on it, in paste diamonds, twinkled happily and Jock blinked intently at it.

"I rang up Guy when you had gone, to take me out to dance somewhere. I feel like dancing tonight, and Barbara is giving a supper at the Embassy. Join us later, Jock. Since you are not playing tomorrow you can stay up late for once. We haven't danced for ages."

He saw them towards the door. The dry familiar perfume she always used when going out at night, dimly bitter-sweet like a faint echo of the tuberose she loved, seemed suddenly to penetrate his nerves as something unfamiliar and hateful.

"Think I'll go to bed," he said. "Give my love to Barbara. Jerry all right?"

"Nurse took his temperature again just after you left. Normal. Good night, dear."



All he could think of, when he was alone, was to thank his stars that he hadn't made a prize fool of himself by blurting out the real reason why he had come back. Well, Providence had

handed him a lemon, all right. Thrown it slap in his face, what's more.

All the same, he could not make it out. It was so unlike Stella. For one thing, Barbara wasn't a favourite friend by a long chalk; for another, she didn't enjoy casually arranged supper-parties; and above all, it was absolutely contrary to character for Stella to leave the house at night if Jerry was not *absolutely* well. Particularly when a temporary nurse was in charge. For their own nurse, good old Pye, had been called away to her sister, who was seriously ill, a week ago, and this one was a temporary until she came back in a day or so.

Pacing about his dressing-room, he suddenly felt himself smiling. Of course, there was an answer. Stella would come back any minute. That was the answer. In a fit of resentment she had arranged to go out. Then he had returned unexpectedly, and she had felt she just had to go on with it. But she would come back now, any minute. He'd take a bet on it. His money was on Stella first, last, and all the time.

The door started opening softly.

Jock stared at it, hardly breathing. The world stood still. One, two, three. Please make it Stella. *Please*.

Stella peeped in, her dear face unhappy-happy, doubtful, uncertainly smiling. His breath came in a gasp. Well, it was a knockout. Trust the old girl to do the right thing.

"Hello, beautiful," she said. Suddenly her eyes were alight.

"Knew you'd come back," he said. He felt himself grinning frantically. He wanted to cry. She ran to him, climbed over him, pressed her cheek to his.

"Knew you hadn't missed your train," she whispered.

"Knew you'd come back," he said. He blinked quickly. Well, this was life, all right. This was the stuff.

She nibbled his ear. "Listen," she whispered, "it stuck out a mile that you hadn't missed your train. Jerry could give you points at fibbing. Listen, I was so mad with you for leaving me for the station without any goodbye kiss, I arranged to go out. Then you came back, looking as though you had just lost a jujube. Just like Jerry, maybe younger. Knew you hadn't missed your train. Listen, mister. Sorry about what I said before you left. Apologise humbly, cross my heart."

"I'll tell you," he said.

"All," she said. She nibbled his ear. "Tell me all. Came the dawn."

So he told her why he had suddenly turned back at the station, and he told her all his thoughts in the taxi coming back home.

"That bit of an accident," she said, "was Providence, all right."

"You bet," he said.

"We would never have been the same two people again, Jock, if we had had this unmade-up row between us for even two days. Unmade-up rows get very septic, no matter what you do to heal them later on. I am much obliged to you, mister, for coming back. I've always thought very highly of you as a husband, cross my heart. But now—crumbs, it's just miraculous, after nearly ten years of marriage to fancy a fellow so much."

"Stella, I am looking forward like anything to living up north. I can't think why I hesitated a moment. Imagine how Jerry will love having a pony of his own."

They were happy. He couldn't remember when he had been so happy. This was the stuff, all right. Stella said he would miss playing good golf. Well, what of it? A chap had to make the best of life. You had to do your best all round, not just in one thing.

You only live once.

Then Stella tiptoed upstairs to the nursery landing on her usual nightly visit. Every night before turning in she would listen for a moment on the dark landing outside Jerry's door, just to be comforted by his breathing. Jerry slept very noisily, so it was quite easy to hear him through the closed door. Once his adenoids were removed it would be different, of course, but meanwhile Stella and Jock were inclined to be quite proud of their son's manly snores.

Jock was in the act of starting to untie his tie when he went to the half-open door.

"Jock!" It was Stella's whisper from the dark landing above.

"What is it?"

"Come up here a minute."

When he had joined her on the dark, narrow landing, she whispered, "Listen."

It took him a second or two to realize that there was nothing to listen to except Stella's quick breathing beside him. Her fingers, icy cold, twined round his wrist. Staring at the dim shape of the closed door, they listened frantically. Then with one movement he flung the door open and switched on the light. Stella gave a cry.

Jerry wasn't there.

The bed was rumpled, empty. The room was empty. The curtains flapped in the draught. He dashed, Stella still clinging to his wrist, across the landing to Nurse's room, the day-nursery. It was empty, neat, the bed unslept in. Stella gave a little whimper. She kept on digging the knuckles of one hand into the palm of the other, staring at Jock.

He said: "This can't happen in England." It didn't sound like his own voice. His heart seemed to be flopping against his chest, like a half-dead fish. He licked his lips, and said: "There must be some explanation."

Suddenly Stella screamed, "But he's not here, Jock! Jerry's not *here*!"

She put her bent thumb between her teeth, biting it. He dashed back to Jerry's room. The draught from the open window had blown a piece of paper to the floor at the foot of the dressing-table.

This is a snatch, Winterset. If you call the police, it will be murder. We know your father has got plenty. This will cost him £2,000. It's up to you and to him, whether you want your son back or not. Instructions will follow later as to method of payment. If you agree to pay, stand at the corner of Piccadilly and Berkeley Street, at exactly eight o'clock tomorrow evening. Guess you will have come back from your golf by then. Stand there for five minutes, so one of us will see you, and then go home. We will let you know how and where we want the money paid. Get busy, Winterset. And don't call the police.

The note in his hand, he stared fixedly at the back of Jerry's hairbrush on the small green dressing-table. It was an ivory one Stella had had as a girl, with an austere black S on it. Jerry didn't like it because it had a handle. He wanted one like his daddy's, without a handle and very bristly. Stella had promised to get him one soon . . .

Stella stumbled blindly out of the room, holding one arm stretched out in front of her. Staring after her, he suddenly felt calm and reasonable. One had to be reasonable. This was England. Things like this didn't happen in England. Kidnapping, threatening letters, and so on. It must be a joke.

He found he was staring at an untidy heap of coloured pegs on Jerry's little bedside table. Red, black, yellow, blue. No,

gray. They were the pegs of his game Peggity, at which he beat all comers. A red one had dropped to the floor.

Of course, this *must* be some kind of a joke. That idiotic note. Darn it, this was England. Anyway, he was going to call the police.



What was Stella doing? He strode out onto the landing. He'd talk sense to the old girl.

"Stella! *Stella*!"

She wasn't there. Then he saw her on the landing below, half-kneeling at the head of the stairs.

"It must be a joke," he called down. "Anyway, I'm going to call the police!"

She did not seem to hear. But he could see, from the look of her back, that she was crying. And the sight of her kneeling figure overwhelmed him with love. He ran down to her.

"Look!" she whispered. Blindly, she held something up to him. It was a small red peg.

"Lord!" he said. Well, it was a knockout.

She clung to his knees, sobbing. "The clever mite! He dropped it—to tell us something. The trail of the Mohawks."

In a frantic hurry, he grabbed her wrist. "Come on, quick." He dashed down, switching on lights as he went.

"Look, another!"

There was a black peg, scarcely visible on the rug at the foot of the stairs. He dashed to the front door, but was not given time to open it.

"Here!" Stella shouted, as though he was deaf. She was by the door leading down to the basement, a yellow peg in her hand. She kept on sniffing and snivelling.

"Gimme your hankie," she said.

"Come on!" he said impatiently, stumbling down the dark stairs to the kitchen. "Where are the darn lights down here?"

She brushed past him to the foot of the stairs and switched on the lights. They stared frantically up and down the stone passage to the back door. It gave out onto a mews—Cherry Pond Mews. Bending down, they found a black peg in the dusty corner by the door.

"Clever chap, our Jerry!" Stella whispered.

"Bet this door is open," he said. It should have been locked

and bolted. It was unlocked, all right.

Cherry Pond Mews, a roughly cobbled roadway, was lit by a lamp at each end. They stared excitedly up and down. Then Stella pointed dumbly. There was a peg bang in the middle of the cobbled passage.

"Must have thrown it," he said, "out of the car in which they took him away."

Stella was looking frantically around. There were a few garage-doors, but mostly ordinary house-doors. Some were painted fancy. All sorts of people had tiny houses and tiny flats in Cherry Pond Mews—artists, lonely women, whatnots. In fact, very few cars were kept there, the neighbourhood having 'gone down.' There were dim lights here and there behind curtained first-storey windows.

"Jock!" she whispered frantically.

He had gone a few steps down towards the Cherry Square opening, peering intently for more coloured pegs. He was so proud of Jerry, it gave him a lump in his throat. He had a man for a son, and no mistake. He must have read in one of his adventure books about captives 'leaving marked trails' and so on.

"Jock!"

Reluctantly, he went back to Stella. Her eyes were dry now; she was quivering with excitement and at the same time trying to talk sensibly, so it wasn't easy to make out what she was saying.

"Listen, I've got an idea, Jock. That 'temporary' is in this, of course—working with some man. She must have had forged references. They thought you had gone away for the night. Then I went out, suddenly. The woman saw her chance, and must have made a signal to someone out here in the news. You came back unexpectedly, but in your dressing-room you didn't hear her slip downstairs with Jerry muffled in her arms. Listen, I'm sure I'm right. I don't think they took Jerry away in a car at all—scarcely any cars come here at night—it would have attracted notice. So they're somewhere *here*, in the mews—in one of the houses. What could be a safer place—from us—from the police—than right under our noses?"

Her excitement communicated itself to him. Heavens, she might be right. Why not? Bang under their noses. The heartless swine. They looked up and down the mews. There were faint lights behind curtains in an upper window about fifteen yards away, towards Hamlet Road.

"Who lives there?" he whispered.

"Don't know. People here come and go. Wait a minute—I've seen a dark sort of man near that door."

"English?"

"Don't know. Just dark—big, youngish, stoutish."

They were tiptoeing towards the door beneath the faintly-lighted window. A few yards from it, Stella bent down with a gasp—another peg.

"Maybe you're right," Jock said. "It's unlikely he could have thrown *this* out of a car without being spotted."

Searching frantically, they could not find any more pegs near the door.

"He had no more," Jock whispered. "Anyhow, he couldn't have grabbed up more than a few in his fist. But this last one is pretty near that door. He might easily have dropped it *at* the door and it rolled here."

"Shall we get a policeman?" Stella said. "There's always one near the square."

Jock scarcely heard her. He was staring at the door of the small house, and he felt murderous. Heavens, what a relief it would be to get his hands on someone. Just show him someone, that's all.

"I'm barging in there," he whispered.

"Me, too," she said.

"We've just got to risk it," he said.

"But if we're wrong?" she whispered.

"That will be just too bad."

He could not think clearly of anything but that he *must* get into that house. There was a bell-push. He pressed it savagely. They could hear the bell. Nobody came.

Jock, his fingers just aching to get a grip on something, was going to press the bell again, when Stella whispered: "Light's out upstairs."

"Then we *are* right," he said. He grinned, flexing his fingers. He pressed the bell again, and at that moment the door was flung wide open and a man, a big shape against the darkness behind, asked angrily:

"What you want, you?"

"It's like this," Jock began apologetically, "we saw a light upstairs and we wanted to ask you—"

On that word Jock landed his right on the man's jaw and drove a left at his heart. As the man sagged backwards he hit

him viciously again, and he crashed on his back into the dark passage.

"Leave the door open," he said to Stella, as he pushed past the man's body in the narrow hall. But he had to stop, baffled by the darkness ahead. She pushed against his back.

"There's always a switch in a hall," she whispered.

His fingers were rapidly feeling both walls of the narrow hall. He found the switch and as he pressed it down he heard Stella gasp behind him. Halfway down the narrow stairs ahead a man stood with a heavy revolver pointed at Jerry. His face was thin and hard.

"Okay," the man said. "The snatch is off. It beats me how you found us so quick. You can have your kid back. But don't move. You and the lady and the kid will just stay here quietly till we make our getaway, see?"

Behind him a woman's dim shape moved uneasily.

"The nurse!" Stella said bitterly. "Jock, that beastly nurse!"

"Don't move!" the man said. The gun in his hand was very steady. "There's a door to your right, Winterset. Get into that room, you and the lady. I'll bring the kid down to you. Start moving, but not this way."

Jock moved, but not to the door on his right. Not likely. He heard Stella behind him cry something frantically, but he went on. He had a job of work on hand. All his being was concentrated on getting his hands round that thin man's throat. He went on step by step, into the mouth of the big automatic.

"I'm going to shoot!" the man yelled.

Jock laughed. His foot was on the stairs now. He was going to shoot, was he? Shoot or not, he was going to have his foul neck wrung. He was going to learn it was dangerous to monkey with a man's son. There was a roaring in his ears, and a sudden livid scream from Stella far away behind him. He scarcely felt the stabbing pain high up in his left arm. His hands were round the man's throat now; he was laughing into the terrified sobbing face beneath him as he swung him down the narrow stairs. The whole world seemed to roar in his ears as, his hands tight round the man's throat, they fell together through a sickening screaming void to the foot of the stairs.

Jock fell on his left arm, and felt himself fainting, but suddenly the pain was so awful that he heard himself yell. "My arm!" he yelled, opening his eyes wide. Stella was bending over him, her eyes streaming with tears. That pulled him together. He

remembered where he was.

"Jerry all right?" he whispered.

"Yes, darling, yes!"

"Get the police," he said faintly. "And then a doctor. My arm . . ."

"Darling, don't worry—everything's all right." She was sobbing pitifully. There were other shapes behind her. He peered painfully at the long white room he was in. His left arm, from the shoulder down, was screaming with pain.

"Jerry's all right then?" he whispered.

"You've been dreaming, sweet," Stella said, trying to smile through her tears. "Such dreams! But now they're putting you to sleep again. You had a bad taxi accident on the way to Euston, and they had to operate . . ."

"Lucky you're alive," a voice said gruffly. His father. Lord, quite a party.

"Better let him rest now," he heard a white shape say from somewhere far away. "The morphine should be taking effect . . ."

Drifting off, he heard Stella say: "His arm—his poor arm!"

Jock simply couldn't help trying to grin up at her from inside deep waves of lovely drifting clouds.

"He's dreaming again!" someone said.

But the old girl knew better. Trust *her*. Love—a dream? Not likely. She bent down and nibbled his ear.

"I'm with you, mister," she whispered.

She put her ear to his lips. "Don't worry, Stella," he tried to say. "You, me, Jerry—we'll manage fine . . . you only live once . . . one arm's enough—with you and Jerry."

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Message for Short-Time Lew

ERIC PARR

Few stories have remained so long in readers' memories as this one. Now it is repeated for others who have found it unobtainable

HIS FULL NAME was Lewis Carroll Lovelace.

It had caused many an eyebrow to be raised in police courts when it was read out and answered to by a cheery, one eyed person, who was obviously one of the boys. It had been given him by his Mum in honour of her favourite author. But in that tight circle (of criminals) known as the Fraternity, he was Short-Time Lew to one and all.

By profession he was a drummer, a day-time housebreaker. Careful and conscientious, he worked the suburbs once a fortnight, grafted alone. He never carried the objects described by the Law as 'housebreaking instruments' and which cause a frown of annoyance to appear on the face of an overworked Chairman of Quarter Sessions.

Lew was no exception to the law of averages, of course. From time to time he got his collar felt and was duly charged and eventually sentenced. But the fairies must have been present at his birth, for he never got more than twelve months, no matter how serious the offence. Thus his name of Short-Time Lew.

The only real bit of bad luck he ever experienced was the loss of his eye which was poked out by the ferrule of an umbrella

belonging to one of two old ginny judies, who were fighting in the Edgeware Road. Lew stepped in between them, and as a result he spent three months in the Eye Hospital.

I first got to know Lew at Wilmer's Sports and Social Club, which is known to the Fraternity as 'Wilmers' and to the long suffering local divisional detective inspector as 'that flipping den of iniquity'.

Eventually I was always able to tell when Lew had got it off for a big tickle. He never used to talk shop. In fact, his favourite topic of conversation was the chances of Chelsea. It was when he started singing a hymn. It was always the same one.: 'Hark, hark my Soul, Angelic songs are swelling'. He had a smashing voice, too, a natural tenor.

When I got to know him better, and we discovered that we were both Roman Catholics, he told me that it was the hymn his old Mum used to sing when she had a fit of conscience, laid off the gin for a few days, and made a steak and kidney pudding. Whenever Lew heard that hymn, it used to give him a glorious feeling that everything was all right with the world.



That winter I got nicked, in Manchester of all places. As a consequence I found myself buttoned up in Strangeways Prison, which is no nick for a Londoner as the north country types, prisoners and screws, combine to make life a misery.

As soon as I could, I pulled a few strings and got myself transferred south to my old London nick. In no time at all I had back my usual job of R.C. Red Band, which gave me the run of the nick, plus one or two other profitable little jobs.

One morning I was drifting around the centre, which is on the ground floor, in the middle of the cartwheel whose spokes form the various halls of the prison, when the principal officer on duty called me over.

"We've got a capital charge coming in tonight," he said. "He's an R.C."

"Poor bastard," I said. "Anyone I know?"

"I dunno. He's a small-time screwsman. Name of Lovelace, Lewis Carroll Lovelace. With a monicker like that it's small wonder that he ends up in the condemned cell."

"Blimey," I said. "Short-Time Lew! He wouldn't hurt a fly."

"Perhaps he doesn't know his own strength. As you're such a

pal of his, you can help the E-Two landing screw to get the C.C. ready.”

Nutty Ferris was the screw on the E-Two Landing which houses the three condemned cells and the topping shed. Under his watchful eye I drew clean bed linen from the Partworn Stores, made the bed and saw that the cell was all shipshape with its armchair for the prisoner, two straightbacked chairs for the death watch, and table for draughts and chess.

I watched in morbid fascination as the Partworn Stores screw laid out a new kit of prison grey on the bed. I noticed that the jacket had white tapes instead of the normal buttons and that there were no laces in the shoes.

My eyes kept straying to the almost imperceptible door let into the wall. Only a thin hair line, a break in the wall betrayed the presence of the execution shed. Through that door the condemned man was finally led, by the death watch straight on to the scaffold. There his hands and feet were pinioned and a white cap placed over his head together with the hempen noose which would jerk back his head at the end of the drop; this had previously been worked out mathematically, to dislocate his fifth cervical vertebrae.

When the Partworn screw had gone, old Nutty Ferris and I sat down for a quiet smoke and a chat. It was then that he told me the whole strength of the Short-Time Lew affair.

It seems that Lew had taken up with a little mystery, which is the Fraternity's expression for one of those teenage girls who drift into London from the provinces.

He found a flat and within a few weeks he had gone overboard for her. He spent all his money on her and soon he was going out to graft twice a week which, as any drummer will tell you, is putting yourself on offer.

The she started messing. Not with a mug who didn't know any better, but with the biggest grass in the business, a geezer known as Harry the Thief. He got his name from his habit—whenever he was accused of informing—of spreading out his arms, rolling his eyes up and exclaiming, “What? Me a copper? But everyone *knows* I'm a thief.”

It wasn't long before Harry had fixed it with this little trollop that the next time Lew had it off she was to get him on the blower quick. He could then tail Lew to his buyer and thereby present his favourite bogey with the spring double!

Just how Lew got wise to the lumbering, no one seems to know. Anyway he saw red and clocked the mystery with a

bronze statuette of a nymph on a globe that she had conned him into buying for her. The law got him before he could get near Harry, much less do him. So he went up the steps at the Old Bailey with a lot of unfinished business on hand . . .



You've no idea the fuss the authorities make when they've got a condemned man in the nick. No other prisoner is allowed to clap eyes on him. If he's got to pass through the gaol during normal hours, a message is sent ahead and all prisoners along the route are hustled away into the nearest cells.

Despite this hush-hush, cloak-and-dagger cods-wallop, the grapevine still hums and the word went around that Lew was taking the whole business very badly. He wouldn't eat and he spent most of his time lying on his bed, smoking like a chimney and staring at the ceiling.

Six days before Lew was due to be topped, I got the big news. It was part of my job to go to the Reception Wing and issue each R.C. entrant with his religious books. This morning, the first man on my list was Jimmy Walker, London's leading creep, or in case anyone gets the wrong idea, the best burglar in the business. He had a special message for me from Monty Rose, Short-Time Lew's buyer.

The message was that two of Monty's boys had caught up with Harry the Thief who now had twenty-six stitches in his boat-race and both knee caps so badly smashed that he would be a cripple for life.

Monty was relying on me to pass on the news to Short-Time Lew.

"Monty's an optimist," I said. "What chance have I of getting near a geezer who's due to be topped a week from now?"

"I don't know," replied Jimmy. "I've given you the message and Monty doesn't like disappointments."



For three days I racked my brains, and then, at midnight on Saturday, I had an inspiration.

Lew was due to be topped on the Tuesday. That Sunday was the last of the three laid down by the law (he had declined the right to appeal) and I knew that he would be led into the R.C.

Chapel before the rest of the congregation. He would sit in the small curtained cubicle at the side of the sanctuary with a screw on either side of him.

Twenty minutes before Mass was due to start, I fussed around old Father Murphy, purposely getting in his way. Two minutes before the off I pulled my master stroke. "I've picked the hymns, father," I said, showing him the list. "Will these be all right?"

"Yes, yes," he said testily, waving me away.

"I'll give them to the escort, then," I said, and dodged through the sacristy door into the chapel.

It was sticking my neck out with a vengeance, of course. It was his job to give the hymns that were to be sung to the death watch. I wasn't supposed to set eyes on the prisoner. I steamed straight over to the condemned cubicle, pulled aside the curtains and handed the list to one of the two screws. At the same time I looked hard and straight at Lew; his eyes lit up to see someone he knew.

"Father Murphy says he thinks the first hymn will be much appreciated," I said to the bewildered death watch, and dropped the curtain as if it were red hot.



Mass began. Father Murphy was reading the Epistle, the organist played the opening bars of the hymn. The lads stood up and started bawling the tune in their usual slaphappy way, and all the time I was straining my ears as I knelt on the altar steps.

Then from behind the curtain, soaring loud and clear above the others, came a firm tenor:

"Hark, hark my soul,
"Angelic songs are swelling."

Out of the corner of my eye I caught Father Murphy's signal that the Epistle was ending and I rose to take the missal across the altar to the Gospel side. I remember I was smiling. Father Murphy looked at me in puzzlement.

I couldn't explain to him that my smile was no act of impropriety but merely satisfaction and a certain amount of joy that the message to Short-Time Lew had got through. He could now get on with the business in hand without loss of face.

period piece

THE HEIRESS

WILLIAM HAMILTON MAXWELL

Taken from the once popular Stories of Waterloo, there is a touch of law and sharp dealing in this story by William Maxwell (1792-1850) to justify its inclusion in this series

MY FATHER left the carabineers some years before the Irish rebellion of ninety-eight. Like greater warriors, the crop of laurels he collected in that celebrated corps was but a short one. It is true he had seen service: his sword, like Butler's knight's, of 'passing worth,' had been unsheathed in executing 'warrants and exigents'; and more than once he had stormed a private distillery, under the leading of a desperate gauger.

He was, however, a stout slashing-looking fellow, and found favour in my mother's sight. She had reached the wrong side of thirty; consequently she made but a short resistance, and bestowed her hand and fortune on the bold dragoon. My mother was an heiress but the estate of Killnacoppal owed 'a trifle of money': now a *trifle* in Connaught is sometimes a sweeping sum; and you cannot safely calculate on rents in Connemara being paid exactly to the day.

I never exhibited precocity of intellect; but before I was sixteen I discovered that our establishment occasionally suffered from a scarcity of specie. At these times my father was sure to be afflicted with cold or rheumatism, and never left the house; and I suppose, for fear of disturbing him, the hall door was but seldom opened, and then only to a particular friend; while an ill-favoured tradesman or suspicious-looking stranger received their commands in the briefest manner from an upper window.

What was to be done with me had cruelly puzzled both my

parents: and whether I should ornament the church, or benefit the revenue, was for a long time under consideration. The law, however, held out more promising prospects than either; and it was decided that I should be bound to an attorney.

Duncan Davidson, of Dorset Street, Dublin, was married to my father's sister. He was of Scotch descent, and like that 'thinking people' from whom he sprung, he held 'a hard grip of the main chance.' Duncan was wealthy and childless, and if he could be induced to bring me up at his feet, God knows what might be the consequence. My father accordingly made the application, and the gracious Duncan consented to receive me for a time on trial.

What a bustle there was in Killnacoppal when my uncle's letter arrived! Due preparations were made for my departure; and as the term of my absence was computed at seven years, I had to take a formal and affectionate leave of my relatives to the fifteenth degree of consanguinity. My aunt Macan, whose cat's leg I had unfortunately dislocated, and who had not spoken to me since Candlemas, was induced to relent on the occasion, and favoured me with her blessing and a one pound note, although she had often declared she never could banish the idea from her mind but that I should travel at the public expense, if my career were not finished in a more summary manner.

I arrived safely in Dublin—and awful were my feelings when first ushered into the presence of my uncle Duncan. He was a short fat man, in a brown coat and flax-coloured scratch-wig, perched upon a high office stool. Considering his dimensions, I used to marvel much how he managed to get there. Holding out his forefinger, which I dutifully grasped, he told me to be steady and attentive, and that my aunt would be happy to see me upstairs. On leaving the room, I heard him softly remark to the head clerk, that he did not much like my appearance, for that I had 'a wild eye in my head.'

I was duly put to the desk, and the course of trial was not flattering to me, or satisfactory to my intended master. It was allowed on all hands that my writing was abominable; and my spelling, being untrammelled by rules, was found in many material points to differ from modern orthographers. Nor was I more successful in comparing deeds—my desk and stool were unluckily placed beside a window which looked into a narrow court, and a straw-bonnet maker occupied the opposite apartment. She was pretty, and I was naturally polite—and who with

a rosy cheek before him would waste a look upon a tawny skin of parchment? I mentally consigned the deed to the devil, and let the copy loose upon the world 'with all *its* imperfections on its head.'

The first trial was nearly conclusive—for never before had such a lame and lamentable document issued from the office of the punctilious Duncan. I had there omitted setting forth 'one hundred dove-cots,' and, for ought I know, left out 'one hundred castles,' to keep them company. My uncle almost dropped from his perch at the discovery; and Counsellor Roundabout was heard to remark that a man's life was not safe in the hands of such a delinquent. I was on the point of getting my *cong e*, and free permission to return to the place from whence I came; but my aunt—good easy woman—interfered, and Duncan consented to give me a farther trial, and employ me to transport his bag to the courts and his briefs to the lawyer.

Any drudgery for me but the desk. With suitable instructions the bag was confided to me, and for three days it came back safely. On the fourth evening I was returning; the bag was unusually full, and so had been my uncle's admonitions for its security. I had got half-way down Capel Street, when whom should I see ont he other side of the way but Slasher MacTigue?

The Slasher was five akin to my mother, and allowed to be the greatest buck at the last fair of Ballinasloe—and would he acknowledge me, loaded as I was like a Jew clothesman? What was to be done? I slipped the accursed bag to a ragged boy—promised him some halfpence for his trouble—prudently assured him that his cargo was invaluable—told him to wait for me at the corner, and next moment was across the street, with a fast hold of the Slasher's right hand.

The Slasher—peace to his ashes! for he was shot stone dead in the Phoenix Park—we never well understood the quarrel in Connemara, and it was said there that the poor man himself was not thoroughly informed on the subject—appeared determined to support his justly-acquired reputation at the late fair of Ballinasloe. Not an eye in Capel Street but was turned on him as he swaggered past. His jockey boots—I must begin below—were in the newest style; the top sprang from the ankle-bone, and was met midleg by short tights of tea-coloured leather; three smoothing-iron seals and a chain that would manacle a deserter dangled from the fob; his vest was of amber kerseymere, gracefully sprinkled with stars and shamrocks; his coat sky-blue, with

basket buttons, relieved judiciously with a purple neckcloth, and doeskin gloves; while a conical hat with a leaf full seven inches broad topped all. A feeble imitation of the latter article may still be seen by the curious, in a hatter's window, No. 71 in the Strand, with a label affixed thereto, denominating it *Neck or Nothing*.

Lord, how proud I felt when the Slasher tucked me under his arm! We had already taken two turns—the admiration of a crowded thoroughfare—when I looked round for my bag-holder; but he was not visible. I left my kinsman hastily, ran up and down the street, looked round the corners, peered into all the public-houses; but neither bag nor boy was there. I recollected my uncle's name and address were written on it, and the urchin might have mistaken his instructions and carried the bag home. Off I ran, tumbled an apple basket in Bolton Street, and spite of threats and curses, held on my desperate course, until I found myself, breathless, in my uncle's presence.

He sternly reproached me for being dilatory.

“What had detained me? Here had been Counsellor Leatherhead's servant waiting this half-hour for his papers;—bring in the bag.” I gaped at him, and stuttered that I supposed it had been already here; but it would certainly arrive shortly. Question and answer followed rapidly, and the fatal truth came out—*the bag was lost!*—for the cad, advertised of the value of his charge, had retreated the moment I turned my back; and although on investigation he must have felt much disappointed at the result of his industry, yet, to do him justice, he lost no time in transferring the papers to the tobacconist and pocketing the produce of the same.

For some moments Duncan's rage prevented him from speaking. At last he found utterance;—“Heaven and earth!” he exclaimed; “was there ever such a villain? He was ruined—all the Kilgobbin title-deeds—Lady Splashboard's draft of separation—papers of satisfaction for sixteen mortgages of Sir Phelim O'Boyl! What was to be done?”

I muttered that I supposed I should be obliged to give Sir Phelim satisfaction myself.

“Oh, curse your satisfaction,” said my uncle; “these are your Connaught notions, you desperate do-no-good. What an infernal business to let any one from that barbarous country into my house! Never had but two clients in my life on the other side of the Shannon. I divorced a wife for one; and he died insolvent

the very day the decree was pronounced, and costs and money advanced went along with him to the devil. The other quarrelled with me for not taking a bad bill for my demand, and giving a large balance over my claim, in ready cash. I threatened law, and he threatened flagellation. I took courage and sent down a writ; and the sheriff returned a *non est inventus*, although he was hunting with him for a fortnight. I ran him to execution and got *nulla bona* on my return. As a last resource I sent a man specially from Dublin: they tossed him in a blanket, and forced him to eat *the original*; and he came back, half dead, with a civil intimation that if I ever crossed the bridge of Athlone, the defendant would drive as many slugs through my body as there were hoops on a wine-pipe !”

I could not help smiling as the simile: the client was a wag; for my uncle in his personal proportions bore a striking resemblance to a quarter-cask.

“But run, every soul of you,” he continued, “and try to get some clue by which we may trace the papers.”

Away clerk and apprentice started; but their researches were unsuccessful; many a delicate cut of cheese was already encased in my Lady Splashboard’s separation bill; and the Kilgobbin title-deeds had issued in subdivisions from the snuff-shop, and were making a rapid circle of the metropolis.

My aunt’s influence was not sufficient to obtain my pardon, and mollify the attorney; and I was despatched, per mail, to that *refugium peccatorum*, as Duncan styled Connemara.

The gentle auditor may anticipate that on my return no fatted calf was killed. I re-entered Killnacoppal without beat of drum—and indeed my demeanour on this occasion was so modest that I had been in undisturbed possession of the front attic for two whole days before my worthy parents were advertised that I had retired from the study of the law, with no future intention to stick to the woolsack.

To communicate the abrupt termination of my forensic pursuits to my aunt Macan was an affair of nice and delicate management. When acquainted with the unhappy incident which had drawn down the wrath of my uncle Duncan she particularly inquired “if there had been any money in the lost bag,” and requested to see the last *Hue and Cry*.

God knows whether I should have been enabled to weather the gale of family displeasure, as my aunt had again resumed the mantle of prophecy, when, luckily for me, the representation of

the county of Galway became vacant by the sudden decease of Sir Barnabas Bodkin; the honest gentleman being smothered in a hackney-coach returning from a corporation dinner at Morrison's.

On this distressing event being known, Mr. Denis Darcey, of Carrig-a-howley Castle, declared himself. He was strongly supported by Mr. Richard Martin, the other member; and his address, from the pen of the latter gentleman, was circulated without delay. In it he set forth his family and pretensions: pledged himself to support Catholic emancipation and the repeal of still fines—humanely recommended his opponent to provide himself with a coffin previous to the opening of the poll;—professed strong attachment to the House of Brunswick, and the Church by law established; and promised to use his utmost exertions to purify the penal code, by making accidents in duelling amount to justifiable homicide: and abduction of heiresses and dogs, felony without benefit of clergy.

A person of Denis Darcey's constitutional principles was a man after my father's own heart: the Killnacoppal interest was accordingly given him, and I was despatched at the head of sixscore freeholders, good men and true, untrammelled with tight shoes, or tender consciences, to give our most sweet voices, in the ancient town of Galway.

But I was not entrusted with this important command without receiving full instructions for my conduct on the occasion. My father, no doubt, would have led the Killnacoppal legion to the hustings in person, had it not happened that the sheriff was on the other side; and, therefore, his public appearance within the bailiwick of that redoubted personage would have been a dangerous experiment. "Frank," said my father, "don't overdo the thing: poll your men *twice*! and more cannot be expected but mind the outwork, for it's there the *tinints* will shine."

I obeyed him to the letter; and without personal vanity, I ascribe the happy return of my esteemed friend Denis Darcey to the unwearied exertions of the freeholders of Killnacoppal. What between pelting the military, smashing the booths, and scattering the tallies, we managed to keep up such confusion that our adversaries could hardly bring forward a man. If dispersed by a charge of cavalry here, we were rallied in a few minutes in the next street, cracking heads and crashing windows: if routed by the Riot Act and a row of bayonets, before the sheriff was well round the corner we had a house pulled down to the tune of

Hurrah for Killnacoppal!

At last, all human means being found unavailable by our opponents to bring in a freeholder, the booths were closed, and Mr. Denis Darcey declared duly elected.

After such feats, how could it be wondered at that I was
courted and caressed,

High placed in halls a welcome guest;

seated within seven of the chairman at the election dinner, drank wine with the new member, toasted by the old one, I mean Dick Martin—and embraced by Blakes, Brownes, and Bodkins in endless variety?—Nor did the reward of high desert end here; for in the next gazette I was appointed to a lieutenancy in the South Mayo militia.

With very different feelings I now returned to my maternal mansion—I, who had left the little lawyer in Dorset Street in disgrace, and been happy to effect a sort of felonious re-entry of the premises at Killnacoppal—I now came home a conqueror; an hundred blackthorns rattled above my head; an hundred voices yelled "*Kinnidy for ivir!*"—a keg of poteen was broached before the door; a stack of turf was blazing in the village; and all was triumph and exultation. We had brought back, of course, the usual assortment of broken bones, left some half-score damaged skulls to be repaired at the expense of the county, and carried back one gentleman totally defunct, who had been suffocated by tumbling dead drunk into a bog-hole. My fame had travelled before me, and my aunt Macan had taken to her bed not from vanity, but vexation of spirit.

My leave of absence expired, and I set out to join my regiment. My mother consulted the Army List, and discovered she had divers relatives in my corps; for there was scarcely a family from Loughrea to Belmullet with whom she was not in some way connected. Some of her relations in the South Mayo she mentioned as being rather remote; but there was Captain Rattigan: his father, Luke Rattigan of Rawnacreeva, married Peter Fogarty's third daughter; and Peter Fogarty and my aunt Macan were cousins-german.

No doubt the gallant captain would know and acknowledge the relationship, and take that lively interest in my welfare which was natural; but, for fear of mistakes, she wrote a letter of introduction with me, having very fortunately danced fifteen years before with the said Mr. Rattigan, at a fair ball at Ballinasloe.

For the second time I left my father's house. The head-

quarters of the regiment were in Naas, and there I arrived in safety; was recognized by Captain Rattigan; presented by him in due form to the colonel; introduced to the corps; paid plate and band-fund fees; dined at the mess; got drunk there as became a soldier of promise, and was carried home to my inn by a file of the guard, after having overheard the fat major remark to my kinsman:

“Rat, that boy of yours will be a credit to the regiment; for as I’m a true Catholic, he has taken off three bottles of Page’s port, and no doubt he’ll improve.”



A year passed over—I conducted myself creditably in all regimental matters, touching drill duty and drinking, when an order suddenly came for a detachment to march to Ballybunnion; in the neighbourhood of which town the pleasant part of the population were amusing themselves nightly in carding middlemen, and feathering tithe proctors. Captain Rattigan’s company (in which I was an unworthy lieutenant) was selected for this important service.

The morning I left Naas for Ballybunnion will be a memorable day in the calendar of my life. My cousin Rattigan frequently boasted, after dinner, that ‘he was under fifty, and above five feet three’; but there were persons in the corps who alleged that he was above the former and under the latter:—but let that pass—he is now, honest man, quietly resting at Craughane churchyard, with half a ton weight of Connemara marble over him, on which his virtues and his years are recorded.

Now, without stopping to ascertain minutely the age and height of the departed, I shall describe him as a thick square-shouldered undersized man, having a short neck and snub-nose—the latter organ fully attesting that Page’s port was a sound and well-bodied liquor. The captain, on his pied pony, rode gallantly on at the head of his charge I modestly followed on foot—and late in the evening we marched in full array down the main street of Ballybunnion, our fife and drum playing to the best of their ability the captain’s favourite quick step, *I’m over young to marry yet*.

My kinsman and I were peaceably settled over our wine, when the waiter announced that a gentleman had called upon us. He was shown up in proper form; and having managed by depressing

his person, which was fully six feet four inches, to enter the apartment he announced himself as Mr. Christopher Clinch; and in a handsome speech declared himself to be an ambassador from the stewards of the Ballybunnion coterie; which coterie being to be holden that evening, he was deputed to solicit the honour of our company on this occasion. Captain Rattigan returned our acknowledgments duly; and he and the ambassador having discussed a cooper of port within a marvellous short period, separated with many squeezes of the hand, and ardent hopes of a future acquaintance.

There was a subject my kinsman invariably dwelt upon whenever he had transgressed the third bottle—it was a bitter lamentation over the numerous opportunities he had suffered to escape of making himself comfortable for life, by matrimony. As we dressed together for we were cantoned in a double-bedded room, Rat was unusually eloquent on the grand mistake of his earlier days, and declared his determination of even yet endeavouring to amend his youthful error, and retrieve lost time.

The commander's advice was not lost upon me. I took unusual pains in arraying myself for conquest, and in good time found myself in the ballroom, with thirty couples on the floor all dancing that admired tune of *Blue bonnets over the border*.

The attention evinced in his visit to the inn by Mr. Christopher Clinch was not confined to a formal invitation; for he assured us on our arrival that two ladies had been expressly kept disengaged for us. Captain Rattigan declined dancing, alleging that exercise flurried him, and he could not abide a red face, it looked so very like dissipation. I, whose countenance was fortunately not so inflammable as my kinsman's, was marshalled by Mr. Clinch to the head of the room.

"He was going," he said, "to introduce me to Miss Jemima O'Brien—lady of first connections—large fortune when some persons at present in possession dropped off—fine woman—much followed—sprightly—off-handed—fond of military men. Miss O'Brien, Captain Kennedy." I bowed—she ducked—seized my offered hand, and in a few minutes we were going down the middle like two-year-olds. Nor had Captain Rattigan been neglected by the master of the ceremonies: he was snugly seated in a quiet corner at cribbage, a game the commander delighted in, with an elderly gentlewoman, whom my partner informed me was her aunt.

Miss O'Brien was what Rattigan called a spanker. She was

dressed in a blue silk lute-string gown, with a plume of ostrich feathers, flesh-coloured stockings, and red satin shoes. She had the usual assortment of beads and curls, with an ivory fan and a well-scented handkerchief.

She was evidently a fine-tempered girl; for, observing my eye rest on an immense stain upon her blue lute-string, she remarked with a smile "that her aunt's footman had spilled some coffee on her dress, and to save him from a scolding", she had assured the dear old lady that the injury was trifling, and that it would be quite unnecessary to detain her while she should change her gown: it was quite clear she never could wear it again; but her maid and the milliner would be the gainers. Amiable creature!—the accident did not annoy her for a second.

The first dance had concluded, when the long gentleman whispered softly over my shoulder how I liked "the heiress"? *The heiress!*—I felt a faint hope rising in my breast which made my cheek colour like a peony. Rattigan's remorse for neglected opportunities rushed to my mind. Had my lucky hour come? And had I actually an heiress by the hand for nine-and-twenty couples? We were again at the head of the room, and away we went—she cutting and I capering, until we danced to the very bottom, *The wind that shakes the barley!*

I had replaced Miss O'Brien with great formality on a bench, when Rattigan took me aside: "Frank, you're a fortunate fellow, of it's your own fault—found out all from the old one—lovely creature—great catch—who knows?—strike while the iron is hot," etc., etc., etc.

Fortune indeed appeared to smile upon me. By some propitious accident all the men had been provided with partners, and I had *the heiress* to myself. "She was, she confessed, romantic—she had quite a literary turn; spoke of Lady Morgan's *Wild Irish Girl*; she loved it—doted upon it;—and why should she not? for Lieutenant-colonel Cassidy had repeatedly sworn that Glorvina was written for herself"—and she raised her fan.

The conscious blush to hide.

Walter Scott succeeded—I had read in the *Galway Advertiser* a quotation from that poet, which the newspaper had put in the mouth of a travelling priest, and alleged to have been spoken by him in a charity sermon, which I now fortunately recollected and repeated. Miss O'Brien responded directly with that inflammatory passage—

In peace love tunes the shepherd's reed.

"And could she love?" I whispered with a look of tender inquietude. "She could; she had a heart, she feared, too warm for her happiness: she was a creature of imagination—all soul—all sympathy. She could wander with the man of her heart from Egypt's fires to Zembla's frost."

There was no standing this. I mustered all my resolution—poured out an unintelligible rhapsody—eternal love—life gratefully devoted—permission to fall at her feet—hand—heart—fortune!

She sighed deeply—kept her fan to her face for some moments—and, in a voice of peculiar softness, murmured something about "short acquaintance," with a gentle supplication to be allowed time for ten minutes to consult her heart. Rat again rushed to my mind; procrastination had ruined him; I was obdurate—pressed—raved—ranted—till she sighed, in a timid whisper, that she was mine for ever!

Heavens!—was I awake?—did my ears deceive me? The room turned topsy-turvy—the candles danced a reel—my brain grew giddy—it was true—absolutely true; *Jemima O'Brien* had consented to become *Mrs. Kennedy*!

Up came Captain Rattigan, as my partner left me for an instant to speak to her aunt. Rat was thunderstruck—cursed his fate, and complimented mine.

"But, zounds! Frank, you must stick to her. Would she run away with you? These d—— lawyers will be tying up the property, so that you cannot touch a guinea but the half-year's rent—may be inquiring about settlements, and ripping up the cursed mortgages of Killnacoppal. At her, man—they are all on the move. I'll manage the old one: mighty lucky, by-the-by, at cribbage. Try and get the heiress to be off—to-morrow, if possible—early hour. Oh! murder—how I lost my time!"

All was done as the commander directed. Rat kept the aunt in play while I pressed the heiress hard—and so desperately did I portray my misery, that, to save my life, she humanely consented to elope with me at twelve o'clock next day.

Rattigan was enraptured. What a chance for a poor lieutenant—as he shrewdly observed, from the very unpretending appearance of *Mrs. Cogan's* mansion, that my aunt's purse must be a long one. We settled ourselves joyfully at the inn fire—ordered two bottles of mulled port—arranged all for the elopement—clubbed purses—sum total not burdensome—and went to bed drunk and happy.

Next morning—the morning of that day which was to bless me with fortune and a wife, Captain Rattigan and I were sitting at an early breakfast, when, who should unexpectedly arrive but Cornet Bircham, who was in command of a small party of dragoons in Ballybunnion, and an old acquaintance of my kinsman. “How lucky!” whispered Rat; “he has been quartered here for three months, and we shall hear the particulars of the O’Briens from him.”

While he spoke the trooper entered. “Ah! Ratty, old boy, how wags the world?—Just heard you had been sent here to exterminate carders—cursed scoundrels!—obliged me to leave a delightful party at Lord Tara’s; but, Rat, we’ll make them smoke for it.”

“Mr. Bircham, my cousin Kennedy. Come, Cornet, off with the scimitar and attack the congo. Any news stirring?”

“Nothing but a flying report that you had determined on sobriety and forsworn a drop beyond the third bottle;—but that shake in your claw gives a lie direct to the tale. And you were dancing, Rat, last night. How did the carnival or coterie go off? Any wigs lost or gowns tattered? Any catastrophe?”

“Why, no—pleasant thing enough—some fine women there.”

“Were there, faith? Why, Rat, you’re a discoverer; for such a crew as figured at the last one, mortal eye never looked upon.”

“I only particularly noticed one—by Jove, a fine woman!—a Miss O’Brien.”

“Miss *Jemmy* O’Brien, as the men call her. Why, Rat, what iniquity of yours has delivered you into the hands of the most detestable harpy that ever infested country quarters?”

“Detestable harpy!”—Rat and I looked cursedly foolish. “Bircham—hem!—are you sure you know the lady?”

“Know the lady! to be sure I do. Why, she did me out of an ivory fan one unlucky wet day that the devil tempted me to enter Mrs. Cogan’s den. I’ll give you what the beadle calls ‘marks and tokens.’ Let me see—Yes—I have it—blue dress, cursedly splashed with beer—she says coffee; soiled feathers, and tricked out like a travelling actress.”

I groaned audibly—it was *Jemima* to a T—Captain Rattigan looked queer.

“My dear Bircham—hem!—you know among military men—hem!—honourable confidence may be reposed—hem! My young friend here danced with her—represented as an heiress to him——”

“By a cursed hag who cheats at cribbage, and carries off negus by the quart.”

“True bill, by——!” ejaculated the Captain. “Complained eternally of thirst and the heat of the room, and did me regularly out of thirty shillings.”

“Rat, Rat, and wert thou so soft, my old one?”

“But, Birchy,” said the Captain, “the devil of it is, my young friend—little too much wine—thought himself in honourable hands, and promised her——”

“A new silk gown—ah, my young friend, little didst thou know the Jezebel. But it was a promise obtained under false pretences—she told you a cock-and-bull story about Lady Morgan—sporting Scott—dealt out Tom Moore by the yard—all false pretences. See her damned before I would buy her a yard of riband. What a pirate the woman is!”

Rat jumped off his chair, drew his breath in, and gulped out:—
“A gown! Zounds, man, he promised to marry her!”

Up jumped Bircham. “To marry her! Are you mad, or are you hoaxing?”

“Serious, by St. Patrick,” said Rat.

“Why then it’s no longer a joke. You are in a nice scrape. I beg to tell you that *Jemmy O’Brien* is as notorious as *Captain Rock*. She has laid several fools under contribution, and has just returned from Dublin, after taking an action against a little drunken one-eyed Welsh major, whom her aunt got, when intoxicated, to sign some paper or promise of marriage. The major, like a true gentleman, retrieved his error by suspending himself in his lodgings the day before the trial; and it is likely that *Jem* and her aunt will be in gaol, for the law expenses.”

Rat and I were overwhelmed, and looked for some minutes in silence at each other. At last I told Bircham the whole affair. The dragoon was convulsed with laughter. “So,” said he, “at twelve o’clock the gentle *Jemmy* is to be spirited away. But come, there’s no time to lose—sit down, Rat, get a pen in thy fist, and I’ll dictate and thou inscribe.”

MADAM—Having unfortunately, at the request of his afflicted family, undertaken the case of Lieutenant Kennedy of the South Mayo regiment, I beg to apprise you that the unhappy gentleman is subject to occasional fits of insanity. Fearing from his mental malady that he may have misconducted himself to your amiable niece last night at the coterie, I beg on the part of my poor friend (who is tolerably collected this morning) to say that

he is heartily sorry for what has occurred, and requests the lady will consider anything he might have said only as the wanderings of a confirmed lunatic!—I am, Madam, etc., your obedient servant,

Terence Rattigan, Capt. S—M— Militia.

To Mrs. Cogan.

How very flattering this apology was to me I submit to the indulgent auditor. I was indubitably proven to have been an ass overnight, and I must pass as a lunatic in the morning. We had barely time to speculate on the success of Bircham's curious epistle, when my aunt Cogan's answer arrived with due promptitude. The Cornet separated the wet wafer with a "Faugh!" and holding the billet at arm's length, as if it exhibited a plague-spot, he favoured us with the contents, which were literally as follows:

CAPTIN RATIGIN.

SIR—I have red your paltrey appollogey for your nephew's breech of promis. I beg to tell you that a lady of the family of Clinch will not submit to be ensulted with impunnitey. My neece is packed and reddy; and if your friend does not appear according to apointment, he will shortly here as will not plase him, from yours to command,

Honor Cogan, otherwise Clinch.

Hawthorne Cotage, Friday morning.

Twelve o'clock passed—and we waited the result of Mrs. Cogan's threats, when the waiter showed up a visitor, and Mr. Christopher Clinch, the prime cause of all our misfortunes, presented himself. He persisted in standing, or more properly stooping—for the ceiling was not quite six feet from the floor—coughed—hoped his interference might adjust the mistake, as he presumed it must be on the part of Lieutenant Kennedy, and begged to inform him that Miss Jemima O'Brien was ready to accompany the said Mr. Kennedy, as last night arranged. Captain Rattigan took the liberty to remark that he, the captain, had been very explicit with Mrs. Cogan, and requested to refer to his letter, in which Mr. Kennedy's sentiments were fully conveyed, and, on his part, to decline the very flattering proposal of Miss Jemima O'Brien.

Mr. Clinch stated that an immediate change of sentiment on the part of Mr. Kennedy was imperative, or that Mr. K. would

be expected to favour him, Mr. C., with an interview in the Priest's Meadow. Captain Rattigan acknowledged the request of Mr. Clinch to be a very reasonable alternative, and covenanted that Mr. Kennedy should appear at the time and place mentioned; and Mr. Clinch was then very ceremoniously conducted downstairs by the polite commander.

Through motives of delicacy, I had at the commencement of the interview retired to the next apartment; and as the rooms were only separated by a boarded partition, I overheard through a convenient chink, with desperate alarm, Captain Rattigan giving every facility to my being shot at in half an hour in the Priest's Meadow. No wonder then Rat found me pale as a spectre, when bursting into the room he seized me by the hand, and told me he had brought this unlucky business to a happy termination. He, the captain, dreaded that Jemima would have been looking for legal redress; but, thank God, it would only end in a duel.

I hinted at the chance of my being shot.

"Shot!" exclaimed my comforter, "why, what the deuce does that signify? If indeed you had been under the necessity of hanging yourself, like the one-eyed major, it would have been a hardship. No funeral honours—no decent wake—but smuggled into the earth like a half-bale of contraband tobacco; but, in your case, certain of respectable treatment—reversed arms—dead march—and Christian burial: vow to God, quite a comfort to be under such flattering circumstances! Frank, you have all the shot luck of the Rattigans about you!"—and, opening the door, he hallowed—"Myke—Myke Boyle, bring down the pace-makers to the parlour."

In a few seconds I heard the captain and his man busily at work, and by a number of villainous clicks, which jarred through my system like electricity, I found these worthies were arranging the commander's pace-makers for my use in the Priest's Meadow.

At the appointed hour I reached the ground, which was but a short distance from the inn. Rattigan and Bircham accompanied me, and Myke Boyle followed with the tools. Mr. Christopher Clinch and his friends were waiting for us; and a cadaverous-looking being was peeping through the hedge, whom I afterwards discovered to be the village apothecary, allured thither by the hope of an accident, as birds of prey are said to be collected by a chance of carrion.

The customary bows were formally interchanged between the

respective belligerents—the ground correctly measured—pistols squibbed, loaded, and delivered to the principals. I felt very queer on finding myself opposite a truculent fellow of enormous height, with a pair of projecting whiskers upon which a man might hang his hat, and a pistol two feet long clutched in his bony grasp. Rattigan, as he adjusted my weapon, whispered, “Frank, jewel, remember the hip-bone; or, as the fellow’s a — of a length, you may level a trifle higher”; and, stepping aside, his coadjutor pronounced in an audible voice—“One!—two!—three”

Off went the pistols. I felt Mr. Clinch’s bullet whistle past my ear, and saw Captain Rattigan next moment run up to my antagonist and enquire “if he was much hurt.” Heavens!—how delightful! I had brought the engagement to a glorious issue by neatly removing Mr. Clinch’s trigger-finger, and thereby spoiling his shooting for life.

With a few parting bows we retired from the Priest’s Meadow, leaving Christopher Clinch a job for the apothecary, and a fit subject for the assiduities of Mrs. Cogan and the gentle Jemima.

If Captain Rattigan had registered a rash vow against port wine, it is to be lamented, for never were three gentlemen of the sword more completely done up at an early hour of the evening than we.

Next day we were informed that Clinch was tolerably well, and that their attorney had been closeted with the ladies of Hawthorn Cottage. We held a council of war, and while debating on the expediency of my retiring on leave to Connemara, where I might set *Jemmy* and her lawyer at defiance, the post brought us intelligence that ‘a turn-out for the line was wanted’; and if I could muster the necessary number, I should be exchanged into a regular regiment.

Off Rat and I started for Naas, and with little difficulty succeeded in making up the quota; and the first intimation the prototype of Glorvina received of our movements was being seduced to the window by the drums, as I marched past Hawthorn Cottage with as choice a sample of food for gunpowder as ever left Ballybunnion. I saluted the once-intended Mrs. Kennedy with great respect; the fifers struck up *Fare you well, Killeavey*; and Captain Rattigan, who accompanied me the first day’s march, ejaculated, as he looked askance at this second Ariadne, “May the devil smother you, Jemima O’Brien!”

I have a mighty affection for the army, and, therefore, I sup-

plicate young soldiers never to propose for a lady in a public ballroom the first night they arrive in country quarters and to shun, as they would the *chorea viti*, that seductive tune, called *The wind that shakes the barley* !—and, finally, to give no credence whatever to any apology offered for a soiled silk unless they have perpetrated the offence in person, or have seen it committed in their own actual presence.

E W M M

June issue includes

And another unpublished
Edgar Wallace

Eden Phillpotts

Berkely Mather

John Boland

Nigel Morland and
the Gouffe Case

and many other top-level stories and features

Coup de Bartram

PETER WALLACE

*The Sport of Kings seldom
fails in the art of
twisting the
twisters*

MONTY IS NEARING sixty now, but not a grey hair in his head, and his figure as trim and well-knit as when he used to ride at 7-8. Not that Monty rode any more. After a long career of managing to prevent favourites winning, and forcing outsiders into the frame, he had become too well-known. The very sight of his name going into the starting list was enough to convince the knowledgeable that something was in the wind. Toby and I know a lot of people but you have to draw the line somewhere and any line drawn the far side of Monty would have to be farflung and crooked. He had never been warned off but there were a number of places he didn't dare go any more.

We were going to Yarmouth races that Tuesday. One of the horses Toby had his beady little bloodshot eyes on was having a warm-up there and he wanted to see him in action. I went round to Toby's flat after breakfast to pick him up and when I found Monty there, my hackles and my suspicions were doing a hula-hula over my head.

"Hullo, Peter, found any winners lately?"

I ignored him and said to Toby, "Tell him 'no', Toby, and let's get off to Yarmouth."

"Now, hold your horses, Peter."

"The advice of the expert?"

"Look, I came to ask a favour. Charley Baron told me you were going to Yarmouth and there's something you could do for me."

"Remind me to do Charley a favour some time. Poison his gin, say. And why can't you do it yourself? Is Yarmouth crossed off your visiting list?"

"Peter," it was the first time Toby had spoken that morning,

"listen to him. It's neat, simple, and could work. Besides, it's nearly honest. We could make a bomb out of this!"

"Toby, we've not had a bad month. We don't need money we'd have to scrub before we could use it."

"You jump to conclusions faster than a steeplechaser through a hedge," complained Monty. "There's nothing to jump down my throat. I came here to ask a favour, yes, but you could have some fun out of it. Or do you like betting offices?"

Now the betting office round the corner was in my bad books at the time. Their explanation of how they had misread the daily settlement ready reckoner was possible but the fact remains that a yank had paid £17 less than it should because they'd worked out a 7/2 shot at 7/2 on. They made it up, but I was wary of them. So Monty's comment interested me.

"Betting shops? What have they got to do with it?"

Monty felt that he was winning and pressed his advantage. "Look, Peter, all I want you and Toby to do is lay out some cash for me. I'll give you the money; you don't have to worry." He produced a bulging wallet and extracted a fistful of fivers, neatly tied with an elastic band. "Two hundred pounds here, and all you've got to do is bet it for me. What could be simpler?"

"Where's the catch?" asked Toby.

"It isn't really a catch—it's a matter of arithmetic. There are two races at Yarmouth with only four horses going. Now, in the two-thirty Perrifield is a cert; it'll probably start at two to one on. Monkley will be the second favourite and Dusky Arab and Charmfinger haven't got an earthly; they'd have difficulty catching their own shadows."

"So the order will be Perrifield, Monkley, the rest nowhere?" asked Toby.

"That's right, and the Tote will pay about five shillings for the dual forecast. Now, if some knowledgeable characters like yourselves start betting Dusky Arab and Charmfinger in Tote dual forecasts there may be a swing in the market: and the hundred you put on those two will bump the forecast up, anyway."

"But you'll lose a hundred pounds "

"Yes, and all the money I put on in betting shops all round London on Perrifield and Monkley will bring it back with interest."

"How will you get it all on?" I enquired.

"Elihu Moss and his four sons are in it with me. We'll have the money on O.K. Then we'll use the profits to get even more out

of the four-thirty race. Bootmarker will be at least three to one on and Dan'l Boon will finish second at about four to one. Bingo was nowhere with bottom weight in a seller at Warwick last week and Breeze Block hasn't been on a course for two years. But with you putting the hundred pounds on those two, the same thing will happen to the prices. We'll clean up thousands on this!"

"Well," I said, "it seems legal enough and I'm prepared to give it a go. What d'you say, Toby?"

"I've read in the papers about these coups," said Toby. "I'm on. I wouldn't miss the chance of actually being involved in one!"

"Right," said Monty. "I shall be giving a party in the Grapes and Feathers in Channing Street tonight. Come round."

"O.K.," I said, "Oh, would it be possible for me to 'phone you from the course after the first one; I can let you know how it's going."

"Good idea," said Monty, and scribbled a number on one of his cards. "You can get me there."



Toby and I drank several toasts to the success of the coup on the way up to Yarmouth and we both entered the course in a radiant glow of good spirits, in both senses. We arrived shortly after 2.15 and busied ourselves at the Tote windows. I put £20 on Dusky Arab and Charmfinger, for the dual forecast, £20 on Dusky Arab and Perrifield, £20 on Dusky Arab and Monkley. Several people were pricking up their ears as they heard and I wondered whether any of them would follow my lead.

I met Toby in the bar and said, "How did you get on?"

"Twenty pounds on Charmfinger and Perrifield, twenty pounds on Charmfinger and Monkley."

"Right. Drink up and we'll go and watch the race."

We did; and never was prediction more surely justified. Perrifield came away from the others at the distance and Monkley chased him gallantly but finished a couple of lengths behind; Charmfinger and Dusky Arab were ten lengths away.

"Monty's on the way to his coup!" I said.

"Good luck to him. Now, lad, let's go to the paddock and watch Carronade. It's nice to do old Monty a good turn but I came to Yarmouth to watch this colt. I've got quite a lot staked ante-post and if he does well the price will shorten."

"Are you betting him today?"

"No. He's got a lot of weight to carry and it's his first time out this season. Then again, they won't push him too hard. Pointon has come down to ride him and he'll have his sights set on the big prizes later in the season. I'll be satisfied if he runs a good race."

In point of fact Carronade looked such a picture in the paddock that I put £20 each way on him and he won his race without being extended. 4/1 I got, and Toby and I celebrated the win.

"He'll shorten to twenty to one before the day's out and I got my money on at fifties and thirty-threes; here's to Carronade."

"Jolly good," I agreed, "and what a good race he ran to-day. Have another!"

So we did. "What about 'phoning ol' Monty?" asked Toby.

"Good ol' Monty," I agreed. "I'll 'phone him."

"Do that, Peter; I'll have a little nap while you 'phone," and Toby leaned back and closed his eyes. I weaved my way to a 'phone booth and dialled the number on the card.

"Hallo?" inquired the voice.

"Monty? Peter here. Well, old fruit . . ."

"Peter!" The shout was so loud I put the 'phone down and rubbed my ear. When I picked it up again Monty was still talking. ". . . so that fool Jehovam Moss went into the shop and tried to put the whole two hundred on. The lazy blighter thought he'd save himself the trouble of walking round the shops! They smelled a rat and refused the bet!"

"No!"

"Yeah, and then called all the other bookies and warned 'em something was up on the two-thirty at Yarmouth. They made a new rule to deal with Tote rigging after the Dagenham do and they're using it. I'm not having any joy at all."

"What about the four-thirty?"

"Don't touch it! Not worth it, Peter. I'll have to think of another coup!"

"Fair enough. I'll bring the hundred to the pub tonight."

"O.K.—oh, you might put it on Bootmarker for me. I may as well get something out of the day."

"Right. 'Bye, Monty; sorry it came unstuck!"

"That's life."

I rang off and ambled in the direction of the bar where Toby was sleeping. I passed the rails and they were offering 2/1 on Bootmarker, so I put £100 of my Carronade winnings for Monty. The price would probably shorten. In fact, as I went to the bar

they were already calling 7/2 on, then 3/1 on. I went into the bar and sat down opposite Toby. He was sorting out piles of Tote tickets.

"What are those?"

"Hullo, Peter; oh, I wasn't going to sleep while you did all the work. Not fair on you, lad! I got twenty pounds Bingo and Breeze Block, twenty pounds Breezeblock and Bingo; twenty pounds Bingo and Dan'l Boon; twenty pounds Dan'l Boon and Bingo. Ten pounds Breezeblock and Dan'l Boon. Ten pounds Dan'l Boon and Breezeblock." As he named each he pointed out the appropriate pile. "That should fix the odds!"

"Toby. I've just been on the 'phone to Monty."

"I know. You were long enough about it!"

"The deal's off! The Moss's mucked it up. Went too greedy on the first and the bookies wised up! Monty told me not to get any Tote tickets—just bung the hundred on Bootmarker."

Toby paled. "Well, he's too late. We can't put . . . you haven't?"

I nodded. "My winnings off Carronade. I thought you'd be here asleep."

Toby looked at the Tote tickets. "So these bits of waste paper are ours? And you've had to pay a hundred for 'em?"

I nodded. Toby took out his cheque book. "I haven't got much cash left on me. I'll share the loss though. Fifty pounds each is better than one hundred off you."

"You needn't do that," I said, but I didn't press him too hard; and he wrote the cheque with a rather unsteady hand. "Thanks, mate," I said.

I still had a few pounds left and I got another drink in while Toby dumped the tickets in a litter box by our table. Then we drank up and left. "Make sure we get corner seats on the train back to London," said Toby. "Though the way our luck's running we'll probably have to stand all the way to London."

As we were going the 4.30 race started and we stopped to watch. Bootmarker was 4/1 on, Dan'l Boon 9/2, Breeze Block and Bingo were at 20/1 apiece. We watched the race with our mouths wide open. It was a two horse race. The two-year lay off had rejuvenated Breezeblock and he started like a train. We discovered later that Bingo had been hopelessly boxed in at Warwick and had had no chance. Now he had plenty of room and set out to dispute it with Breezeblock.

Bootmarker and Dan'l Boon lay handily placed until the final

furlong when both were brought out to challenge. Toby gripped my arm and his fingers almost met through the flesh. "They're not going to make it! They've misjudged the pace!" They had misjudged the pace and they didn't make it. Breezeblock held on to beat Bingo by half a length, with Bootmarker third and Dan'l Boon fourth.

Toby and I stared at each other and then fought our way back to the bar through crowds of cursing punters. Toby tipped the litter box on the table and we sorted out all the junk mixed up with the discarded racecards and pie boxes and empty cigarette packets. We found our Tote tickets. Intact. Then over to the Tote windows we went. The day had certainly come good for us.

We got our corner seats and on the way back to London we shared out the £1,720 which we had won. We didn't go to the Grapes and Feathers that night—Monty might not have appreciated our luck!

I was happy enough to have won £860—who wouldn't be—but Toby's cup of joy was full when he read in one of the papers next day. *Coup at Yarmouth.*

In an unexpected turn up in the 4.30 only a few punters guessed that Breezeblock and Bingo would show in the frame: and one man who backed his judgment won over £1,700. A great coup, and how he saw it coming we'll never know. Even the stables concerned were shattered by the form their horses showed.

Toby's smile as he showed me this was blissful. "I've read in the papers about these coups. I always wanted to be involved in one," and he sat back and lit one of the expensive cigars which we are now smoking. Until the next one doesn't come off!

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SOLUTION TO EWMM CROSSWORD (No. 26)

ACROSS. 1, Criminologist. 8, Tobacco. 9, Bailiff. 11, Aye-aye. 13, Original. 15, Keyed. 16, Outward. 18, Collie-r. 19, Pluto. 21, Outsider. 23, Blades. 25, Naphtha. 26, Destroy. 28, Introspection.

DOWN. 2, Robbery. 3, Mac. 4, Noon(rev.). 5, Laboratory. 6, Going. 7, Skinned. 8, Tracked down. 10, Feloniously. 12, Yodel. 14, Police cars. 17, Appal. 18, Cut open. 20, under-go. 22, Inter. 24, Edge. 27, Set.

NEW BOOKS

JOHN de SOLA

non-fiction

SPIES OF THE 20th CENTURY, Charles Franklin
(*Odhams*, 21s.)

Written with Mr. Franklin's customary efficiency and close attention to exact factual detail, this gives background material on spying and spy organisations, then deals with the individual spies from the anarchists of Edwardian times, by way of Rintelin, Mata Hari, Alan Nunn May, to the modern Central Intelligence Agency. A splendid book, but personally, having very strong views on the subject, I should have separated the traitors from the comparatively clean-smelling spies, and put them on their own as perhaps, *Scum of the 20th Century*.

fiction

Agatha Christie, *The Greenway Edition* (*Collins*, 16s. each)

A very welcome new venture, comprising four Agatha Christie novels: *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*; *The Labours of Hercules*; *Crooked House*, and *A Murder is Announced*. The bindings are uniform, and well done, and the books re-set in the same make-up and type-faces. The publishers are to be congratulated on a well-thought-out production crime fans will welcome.

BISHOP MUST MOVE, Kenneth Bird (*Cassell*, 21s.)

Opening with a tense and tight-knit scene of a gun focused on the Primate of Slavenia, this story gallops into a wild tangle of intrigue, plot and counter-plot in the approved modern style where idiot ideologies quarrel with slightly dotty anti-ideologies. The pace is fantastic and the story told well and with a professional zest.

BRIGHT GREEN WAISTCOAT, The; Pete Fry
(*John Long, 15s.*)

The investigator is the narrator of this neatly told tale in which he goes to Dublin to sort out an insurance tangle, but the game gets serious when some odd Irishmen enter it. Then there is a dead man above a burned out London pet shop, which promptly causes the author to pull out every stop. Tangy, zestful.

CLUTCH OF COPPERS, A; John Creasey (*John Long, 15s.*)

Half hiding behind one of his pseudonyms ('Gordon Ashe') the ubiquitous Mr. Creasey now offers the 36th adventure by 'Gordon Ashe', told with his usual riotous violence. This time a welcome plague of coppers descends on London. Then somebody tries to assassinate an important foreign policeman and all hell, as they say, blasts everything wide open. Well up to standard.

CO-ORDINATOR, The; Andrew York (*Hutchinson, 21s.*)

I liked Jonas Wilde, the Eliminator, when I first met him last autumn, and now he is back again in a second plush-lined adventure—elegant death in the *foie gras* world. The same bunch of spies, twisters, mid-European weirdies are part of the tale but it is to be praised for being literate, exciting, and remarkably well dove-tailed.

DEATH IN DIAMONDS, Kenneth Giles (*Gollancz, 21s.*)

One of those smooth, tricky ones, reminding me of the vanishing hotel room and the smallpox victim in the Great Paris Exhibition. This concerns an American lady in London who dumps her luggage in a loaned apartment; goes out; returns, to find it has been for years the possession of a grouchy old army who swears she has never been in *his* apartment and never will . . . so she goes to the coppers, and thus begins as nice and clever a mystery as you've read for a long time.

DEATH SHALL OVERCOME, Emma Lathen (*Gollancz, 18s.*)

Delicately, with charm and humour, this story handles the awkward American problem of the entry of a Negro into the higher echelons of Wall Street where even Conservatives would not be conservative enough. There is an initial error murder (when a bystander is killed instead of the Negro). Nation-wide troubles spill out and feelings run high. A superb crime story.

DOOMSDAY ENGLAND, Michael Cooney (Cassell, 21s.)

Head and shoulders above the average run of espionage tales and with something wholly new in Secret Service men, the Queen's Investigator and so powerful that (bless him!) he can tell the P.M. to shut up. Doomsday is an enormous cobalt bomb hidden somewhere in England by those wicked Russians. Style's a bit hearty at times, but plot and counter-plot are plus; the excitement is also plus to the very end and the baddies not only bite the dust but they've done it in droves from early in the story. A new and hair-raising thrill exponent, Mr. Cooney.

FLAT 2, Edgar Wallace (John Long, 16s.)

Back in hard covers again 40 years after publication, this is a really top EW, a murder that could not have happened to the sort of villain who is better dead, anyway. But some nice people get unwittingly caught up in the complications, and the killer is a a really unexpected surprise. Packed with the unfailing EW knack for gripping the reader, while charming and amusing him.

GENTLY NORTH-WEST, Alan Hunter (Cassell, 18s.)

Fortunately for us, Alan Gently is on holiday in Scotland when

DEADLINE

Thomas B. Dewey

Action and suspense in the Hammett tradition: time and small-town hostility work against Mac, the Chicago private eye, in his fight to save a young neurotic from the electric chair.

May 25th

16s.

New Crime from T.V. Boardman

a dirk-stabbed corpse is found. A routine case, obviously enough, but the dirk attracts Gently's sense of the unreal . . . and we are thrust into a well told whodunit, neatly observed and with a genuine sense of Scotland for a change. Easily the best Gently yet; warmly recommended.

HEIR HUNTERS, THE; Bill S. Ballinger (*Boardman*, 18s.)

A hard-up young American in California is offered a cleaning up job by Beth Temple, the outsize but beautiful owner of a bungalow hire business. He promptly unearths an excitement of bankbooks (belonging to a dead man) totalling \$100,000. The complications begin when he seeks heirs to the cash. A fast mover with a stunning and enjoyable surprise ending.

HERE LIES MY WIFE, Edmund McGirr (*Gollancz*), 21s.

An American advertising world whodunit, told splendidly and packed with good character drawing which insists that you keep on turning the pages until the strong ending. But it has an ugly touch, its picture of the shabby philosophies of publicity and of those who activate it; it seems to be a world where the eternal verities matter far less than the drivelling qualities of a quiz programme. As an exercise in triviality it makes you shudder; as a crime novel, top marks.

IN PURSUIT OF EVIL, Hugh Mills (*Triton*, 21s.)

A new publisher on the scene (welcome!) offers a slick adventure which features Franz Keppel, who 'writes' the story (which he first titled 'Memoirs of a voyeur'). Death and disaster seem to surround Keppel, who has a gift for nastiness, and his story is equally unpleasant but biting and well told. Half way between a crime novel and a novel, this is a definite must.

INSPECTOR GHOTE CAUGHT IN MESHES, H. R. F.

Keating (*Collins*, 16s.)

A sober and fascinating crime story in which an American physicist smells out some curious goings on in an atomic weapons laboratory and is promptly found murdered on the Bombay-Poona highway. Charming, ingenuous Inspector Ghote is given the mystery to solve and is plunged into a wild (yet soberly recounted) series of happenings. A solid, engaging tale which should delight every whodunit fan.

JUDGE DEE AT WORK, Robert van Gulik (*Heinemann*, 21s.)

Another volume about the real life Sherlock Holmes of China (A.D. 630-700), comprising fictional stories which could have happened for the brilliant Judge Dee to solve. There are eight in this book, and their backgrounds as well as their plots will be wholly new to the crime enthusiast. As an old China-hand I enthuse over the author's superb understanding of the Chinese mind and character, and give this book my warmest recommendation.

MURDER BY PROXY, Harry Carmichael (*Crime Club*, 16s.)

That pleasant detection team of Quinn and Piper return in a tale of the events following on the conviction of a man guilty of fraud. Then the prisoner is sued for divorce by his wife, and, after he is released, an insurance company gets annoyed about a payment made on his behalf . . . the plot gathers strength with every page and turns into a rattling good whodunit.

PRIVATE I, Jimmy Sangster (*Triton*, 21s.)

The alarming opening to this deft cliff-hanger isn't intended to leave the hero, at the end of this book, in a happy position, but

'Unhackneyed stories by known and less-known writers . . . a splendid . . . gift volume'

—Julian Symons, *Sunday Times*.

'Top-class crime anthology . . . a "must"'

—W. H. Smith & Sons' *Trade News*.

'Here are 18 stories exemplifying the vitality of the mystery short story. Many of the stories contain a punch in the last line. A well chosen collection.'

—*Library World*.

'Each story a model of expertise. As mysteries in miniature they are of a high standard, pungently alive.'

—*Baptist Times*.

JUST A FEW OF THE COMMENTS ON

JOHN GREASEY'S MYSTERY BEDSIDE BOOK

Edited by Herbert Harris for the *Crime Writers' Assoc.*

Published by **HODDER & STOUGHTON** at 18s

hope is everything . . . the story is an espionage thriller, well told and pulling no punches at all. The plot to some extent is conventional, which cannot be avoided, but there is a sort of good humoured toughness which lifts this one out of the common rut.

QUEER KIND OF DEATH, A; George Baxt (*Cape*, 21s.)

There's a pun in the title, and a homosexual male model stabbed in a bath tub; there's a Negro detective named Pharoah Love (who, if he says 'cat' once more in another book, will drive this reviewer out of his mind), and a struggling writer with a nasty ex-wife. The background is the idiot, dead-stupid New York hip world and most of the characters are moronic long-hairs. A very well written crime story indeed, but, gosh! what a parade of nasties the man has dragged out.

ROOM 13, Edgar Wallace (*John Long*, 16s.)

Another famous oldie newly published in hardback. This is the story of the Big Printer, of Johnny Gray who comes out of jail with something on his mind and, above all, of the able and enchanting Mr. Reeder, who is the only one clever enough to

**AN OUTLINE OF
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NIGEL MORLAND

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solve the absorbing problem of Room 13. Thoroughly expert and entirely gripping, a vintage EW to be read again by aficionados, and a pleasure in store for newcomers.

STRIKE OUT WHERE NOT APPLICABLE, Nicolas Freeling (*Gollancz*, 18s.)

Opening with deceptively gentle simplicity, this whodunit brings back Commissaire Van der Valk (recovered after his wound, received in *The King of the Rainy Country*). Convalescing, he is involved in a small town murder case—which does not seem like murder—and handles it in his customary able fashion. Very readable indeed, but I would question the publisher listing Mr. Freeling's previous books as 'thrillers'—thrilling, yes, but not classifiable as knockabout bloodbaths.

TRIAL OF SOREN QVIST, THE; Janet Lewis (*Gollancz*, 25s.)

This is both fascinating and remarkable, the story of Pastor Qvist, who is tried for the murder of a deadbeat, and executed—the trial is fair and the suspect seems to believe in his own guilt. Then, 20 years later, the murdered man turns up and from there the plot takes on a sort of mad unreality all the more chilling because it is so possible. The setting of the events is in the 17th century, but it and its characters are wholly contemporary. Fine and moving.

A SCATTER OF PAPERBACKS

BRIDE BY CANDELIGHT, Dorothy Eden (*Hodder*, 3s. 6d.)

A suspense tale with a curious atmosphere of threat. The plot concerns a dead man who comes to life, a plague of anonymous letters, and an odd house. Excellent.

COURT OF CROWS, Robert A. Knowlton (*Penguin*, 5s.)

A woman and her lover are suspected of her husband's killing, and a small town gangs up on them. A brilliant, gripping tale; beautifully written.

GLASS CELL, THE; Patricia Highsmith (*Pan*, 5s.)

Another nerve-jerker. This one is about a prisoner who is released, after prison torture, and becomes involved in another crime of which he is innocent.

JOKERS, THE; Martin Sands (*Pan*, 3s. 6d.)

A bomb in the Tower of London and robbery of the Crown Jewels, together with assorted (if sometimes light-hearted) mayhem keep this one moving jet-wise.

NETWORK, THE; Godfrey Smith (*Hodder*, 3s. 6d.)

A television background tale in which a network, badly in the red, is jerked into moneymaking by adroit crookery. A brisk, disenchanted book, written scalpel-wise.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS, John Creasey (*Hodder*, 3s. 6d.)

Wearing his hat labelled 'Michael Halliday', Mr. Creasey gives us a toughie about a man who believes his son to be a murderer. Plenty of drama and thrills.

RUSH TO JUDGMENT, Mark Lane (*Penguin*, 8s. 6d.)

The much-discussed probe into the Kennedy murder by a lawyer who dissected the Warren Commission report for three years, and comes up with some incredible facts.

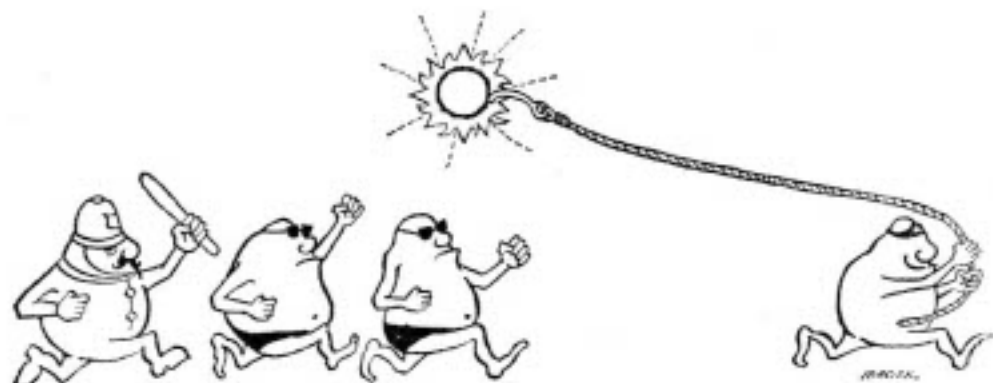
TAKE A MURDER, DARLING, Richard Prather

(*Hodder-Coronet*, 3s. 6d.)

Murder threatens a chain of beauty parlours in Los Angeles, and Shell Scott rescues assorted lovelies from all sorts of dangers. Wild, woolly, and gripping.

VENDETTA FOR THE SAINT, Leslie Charteris (*Hodder*, 3s. 6d.)

Simon Templar, with verve and gusto, chesting up to the Mafia and—bless him!—beating hell out of it. A slick and thrilling adventure indeed.



READERS SAY...

Extracts from current letters. Opinions expressed are those of the writers. Publication in this open forum does not necessarily mean that EWMM agrees with any views offered.

Drugs

I am constantly being shocked by the inroads of drug addiction in this country. Obviously, it seems to me, it is useless to proceed against addicts. Whatever one's opinion of them, once they are 'hooked' they cannot be held to blame.

But the 'pushers', the salesmen—they are to blame. Why not hit them really hard, why not five years for a first offence, ten years for a second and for a third, hanging.

Compared to these beasts, murderers seem respectable!

(Mrs.) E. D. CRITCHLEY.

Birmingham, 15.

- *Readers may care to debate this tricky question; the drugs menace is a fearsome thing, but, even if it were legal, the threat of hanging probably would not deter those who profit out of misery and degradation.*

Choice

It was clever of your critic to pick *A Long Way to Shiloh* last September as the book which deserved to be the best crime novel of 1966, and to have this prescience endorsed by the Crime Writers' Association in February by giving it their award. I do want to record my own complete agreement with this choice, and I am sure many readers agree.

I would like to record my appreciation of your editorials. They have taught me a great deal about the crime writing world. I think it is good for readers to know the 'ins and outs' of it all, and not to think, as some uninformed persons do, that it is just a collection of thriller writing hacks!

F. H. MASON.

Westbury, Wilts.

Bouquets

The Wimbledon Vampire [April] was EW at his light-hearted best! His gift for gentle comedy is as with it today as it was in his heyday.

(Mrs.) M. HILL.

Liverpool, 1.

Penelope Wallace has her father's touch. [April issue] What a joy to see them both in one issue. I congratulate you.

(Mrs.) E. A. BEST.

Wimbledon, S.W.19.

Bravo! You excelled yourself in April with John Steinbeck, a new EW and an Anton Chekhov story I had never even heard of, and I am a devoted fan of his!

D. M. E. HORBOROW.

Henley-on-Thames.

In my February issue I did enjoy *Ricochet in Pearls*, by Edgar Wallace, *Blonde in the Ointment*, and Evelyn Waugh's and Thomasina Weber's shockers. Some of your stories often startle me, but are never nauseating. Congratulations.

L. S. NOBBINS.

Port Taufiq, Egypt.

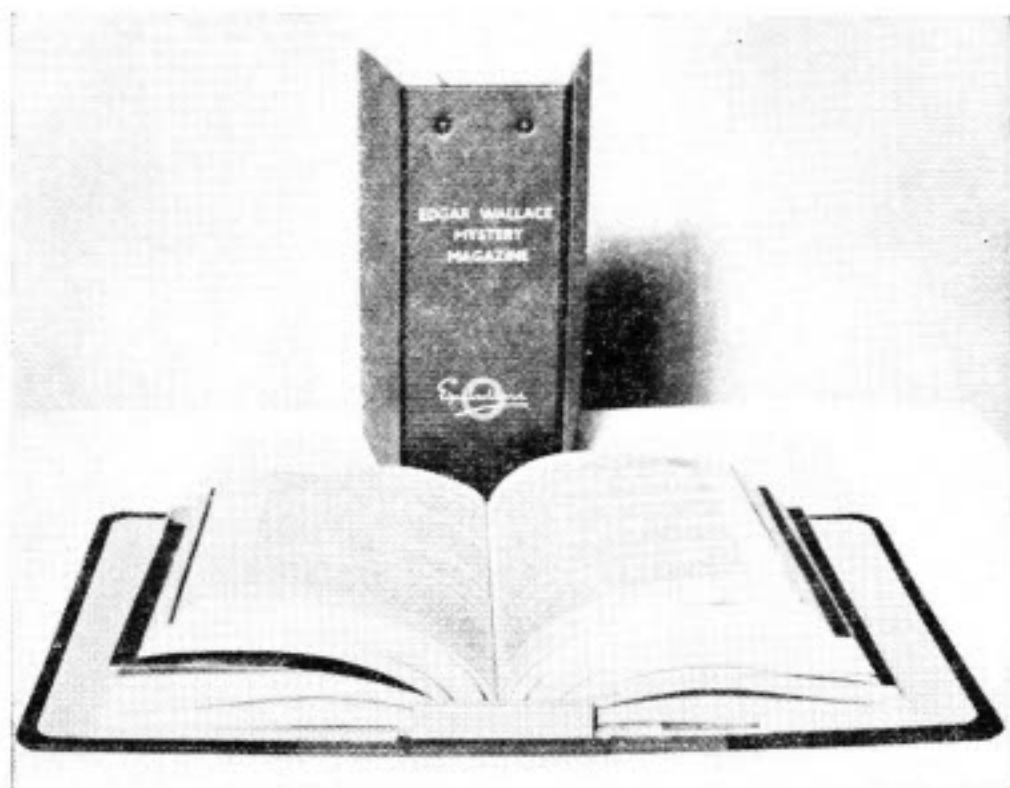


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