

THRILLING MYSTERY

10¢

SUMMER
ISSUE

THE JABBERWOCKY MURDERS

*A Baffling
Mystery Novel*
By FREDRIC BROWN

DEATH DRAWS A FULL HOUSE

*An Undercover Jones
Novelet*
By LEE
FREDERICKS

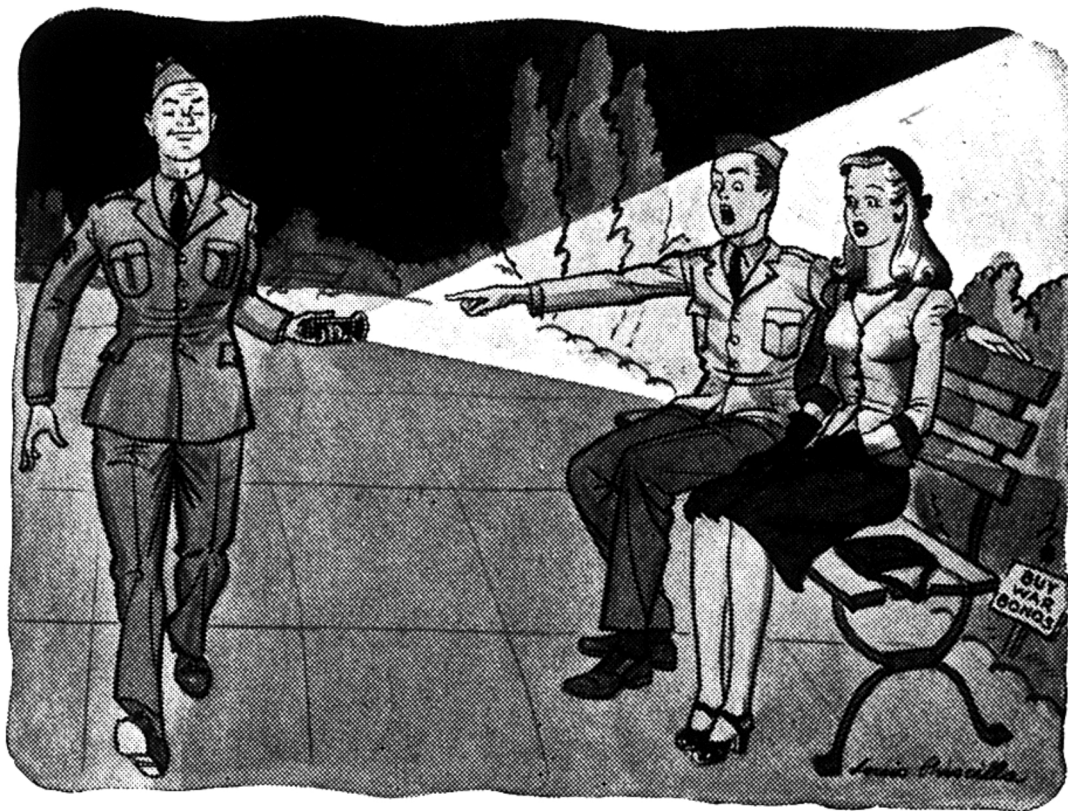
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A THRILLING
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THRILLING MYSTERY

VOL. XXII, No. 1

EVERY STORY BRAND NEW

Summer Issue



A Complete Mystery Novel

THE JABBERWOCKY MURDERS

By FREDRIC BROWN

It Was Like a Whimsical Alice in Wonderland Adventure to Editor Doc Bagden, Until Two Murders, a Robbery and a Frame-up Jolted Him Back to Stern Realities! - - - - - 11

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A Timely Message for All Americans

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1st Lieutenant in Signal Corps

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Fixing Radios pays better now than for years. With new Radios out of production, fixing old sets, which were formerly traded in, adds greatly to the normal number of servicing jobs.

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The purpose of this department is to furnish such entertainment. It presents true stories of strange happenings gathered from all corners of the earth and authenticated by reliable persons.

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Send in Coupon on Page 80

Dust of Earth

TIMOTHY WILLOUGHBY relates this experience which occurred near South Plainfield, New Jersey:

Some years ago I was out of a job and had to hop freights seeking any kind of work in various towns. One afternoon, hungry, I came upon a broken-down house just out of town, where weeds hogged most of the front yard. I figured that anyone living in that place would share a meal with me, if he had one.

I knocked at the side door. The door opened slowly and a little old lady supporting herself with a cane, smiled at me. Before I could utter a word, she said:

"You're hungry, aren't you? I have a pie in the cupboard. Come in."

She turned and started toward what was evidently a kitchen, although it was pretty dark in the room, for all the shades were drawn. As she turned off into the kitchen, I followed her.

As I reached the kitchen door, I stopped. There was enough light to reveal thick dust on the framework and the floor.

I looked up, wondering if the old lady was cracked or something. My appetite seemed to have left me and I was going to tell her not to bother. But she had disappeared. There was no other door, and she couldn't have gone out the window.

A bit scared, wondering if she had fallen through some trap door, I walked in carefully to examine everything in the room. I

opened the cupboard. It was as empty as my stomach. Dust on the shelves was an inch thick. My first thought was to get out of the place. And as I turned to leave, a State Trooper was standing in the doorway.

"What are you doing in here?" he asked. "I saw you enter the house a minute ago. Do you want to set fire to the place? You can't sleep here."

"I don't want to sleep, here," I said. "I wouldn't have come in, only the old lady asked me to . . . she said she had a pie in the cupboard."

"Old lady!" he sneered. "Are you crazy? Look at the floor . . . only *your* footprints."

And he was right. The light through the open door made the dust stand out like snow.

It took me ten minutes to convince the cop I wasn't a crook. And when he left me on the road, he said:

"I don't know whether you are sane or not—but the old lady you described was the Widow Martin. She used to live alone in that house—but she died five years ago."

Pirate Guest

THOMAS ROAN, a well known author of western novels, used to live in a beach-front house near Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey. The house had a strange history.

Roan reveals that some years ago this house was occupied by a Doctor Grevel, who believed he was a descendant of the famous

(Continued on page 78)



Lend Me 15 Minutes A Day

**..and I'll prove
I can make you
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I'M "trading-in" old bodies for new! I'm taking men who know that the condition of their arms, shoulders, chests and legs—their strength, "wind," and endurance—is not 100%. And I'm making NEW MEN of them.

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wonders for other fellows, everywhere!

I WAS A 97-lb. WEAKLING

All the world knows I was ONCE a skinny, scrawny 97-pound weakling. And NOW it knows that I won the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man." Against all comers! How did I do it? How do I work miracles in the bodies of other men in only 15 minutes a day? The answer is "Dynamic Tension," the amazing method I discovered and which changed me from a 97-pound weakling into the champion you see here!

In just 15 minutes a day, right in the privacy of your own home, I'm ready to prove that "Dynamic Tension" can lay a new outfit of solid muscle over every inch of your body. Let me put new, smashing power into your arms and shoulders—give you an armor-shield of stomach muscle that laughs at punches—strengthen your legs into real columns of surging stamina. If lack of exercise or wrong living has weakened you inside, I'll get after that condition, too, and show you how it feels to LIVE!

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2. Don't try to profit from the war. Don't ask more than you absolutely *must* for what you have to sell.

3. Pay no more than ceiling prices. Buy rationed goods only by exchanging stamps.

4. Pay taxes willingly.

5. Pay off your old debts—all of them.

6. If you haven't a savings account, start one.

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7. Buy and hold War Bonds. Don't stop at 10%. Remember—Hitler stops at nothing!

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Make it do... Or do without.**



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*H. C. S.,
California

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NOTICE

Please don't confuse the U. S. School of Music method with any system of teaching music "by ear" or by trick charts. Our method teaches you to play by actual notes—not by any trick or number system.

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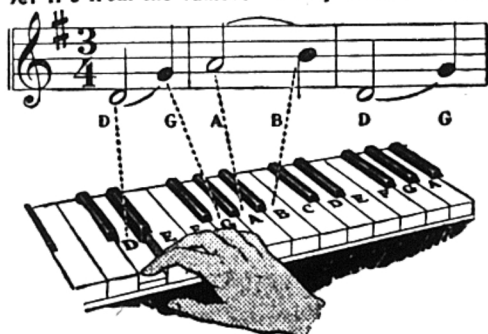
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The Mechanism of Mind



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and *What You Can Do About It!*

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THE ROSICRUCIANS (AMORC), SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, U. S. A.



Holding the gun I backed
away towards the other
car

THE JABBERWOCKY MURDERS

By FREDRIC BROWN

*It Was Like a Whimsical Alice in Wonderland Adventure
to Editor Doc Bagden, Until Two Murders, a Robbery
and a Frame-Up Jolted Him Back to Stern Realities!*

CHAPTER I

Looking Glass Shadow

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

I TOOK another drink out of the bottle on my desk and then typed the last take and handed it to Jerry Klosterman to take over to his linotype. He looked it over. "About one sentence strong, Doc," he said. "There were fourteen lines to fill."

"Then cut out the part about sullyng the fair name of Carmel City," I told him.

He nodded and went over to the machine. I took the last drink and dropped the bottle into the wastebasket. Then I walked over to the window and looked out into the dusk while the mats clicked down the channels of the linotype. Smoothly and evenly. Jerry rarely poked a wrong key.

The lights of Oak Street flashed on while I stood there. Across on the other sidewalk Miles Harrison hesitated in front of Smiley's Inn, as though the thought of a cool glass of beer tempted him. I could almost see his mind work.

"No, I'm a deputy sheriff of Carmel

A BAFFLING COMPLETE MYSTERY NOVEL

County and I have a job to do yet tonight. The beer can wait."

His conscience won. He walked on. I wonder now whether, if he had known he'd be dead before midnight, he wouldn't have taken that beer. I think he would have. I'd have done it, but that doesn't prove anything, because I'd have taken it anyway. I never had a New England conscience like Miles Harrison.

But of course I wasn't thinking that then, because I didn't know any more than Miles did what was going to happen. I found mild amusement in his hesitation, and that was all.

Jerry called to me from the stone, where he had just dropped in the newly set lines at the bottom of the column.

"She's a line short now, Doc. But I can card it out."

"Lock it up and pull a stone proof," I said. "I'll be in Smiley's. I'll buy you a drink when you bring it over."

I put on my hat and went out.

That's the way it always was on Thursday evenings. The Carmel City Courier is a weekly, and we put it to bed all ready to run on Thursday night. Friday morning the presses roll—or to be more accurate the press, singular, which is a Miehle Vertical, shuttles up and down. And about Friday noon we start to distribute.

Big Smiley Wessen grinned when I came in.

"How's the editing business, Doc?" he said, and laughed as though he'd said something excruciating. Smiley has as much sense of humor as a horse.

"Smiley, you give me a pain," I said. It's safe to tell Smiley the truth. He always thinks you're joking anyway.

He grinned appreciatively. "Old Henderson?"

"Old Henderson it is," I said, and he poured it and I drank it.

HE WENT down to the other end of the bar and I stood there, not thinking about anything. This time Thursday evening always was a let-down. So I just stood there and tried not to see myself in the mirror and didn't succeed.

I could see myself, Doc Bagden, a small man getting gray around the temples and thin on top. Editor of a small-town weekly and, thank goodness, not much chance of ever getting any higher than that. Another twenty—thirty years of that is bleak to look forward to, but anything else is bleaker. Nor a harp at the end of it. I envy some of my fellow-townsmen their confidence in harps, for it might be something to wait around for.

I heard a car swing in to the curb out front and, for no reason, blow its klaxon.

"Al Carey," I told myself.

He came in, which was a treat for Smiley's Inn, for Alvin Carey usually went to swankier places in the nearby larger towns. Not that I blamed him for that. He had a spot to fill as the nephew of the town's richest man and naturally he spent as much of his uncle's money as he could get his hands on. Which was pretty much for Carmel City, although it wouldn't have made a splash in New York.

Of course I'd called him a wastrel—not by name—in editorials, because people expected me to. But I liked him, and had a hunch I'd make a worse scion of wealth than Alvin did.

Besides, he read a lot of the right things and had more of an idea of what it was all about than the rest of town.

"Hi, Doc," he said. "Have a drink, and when are we going to have another game of chess?"

"Old Henderson," I told Smiley. "Alvin, my son, I am playing chess now, and so are you. The White Knight is sliding down the poker. He balances very badly."

He grinned. "Then you're still in the second square. Have another drink."

"And there," I said, "it takes all the drinking I can do to stay in the same place. But that won't be for long. From the second square to the fourth, I travel by train, remember?"

"Then don't keep it waiting, Doc. The smoke alone is worth a thousand pounds a puff."

"Old Henderson," I said to Smiley.

Then Al left—he'd just come in for a short snort.

"What the devil were you guys talking about?" asked Smiley.

There wasn't any use trying to explain. "Crawling at your feet you may observe a bread-and-butter-fly," I said. "Its wings are thin slices of bread-and-butter, its body a crust, and its head is a lump of sugar."

"Where?" said Smiley. I don't think he was kidding.

Then Jerry Klosterman appeared with the rolled-up stone proof of the final page. I don't think I ever did get around to telling Smiley what Al and I had been talking about.

It was getting too much trouble to keep track of individual drinks, so I bought the rest of the bottle from Smiley, and got another glass for Jerry.

Then we took the page proof over to a table and spread it out, and I gave it a rapid reading. I marked a few minor errors and one major one—a line in an ad upside down. The ads, if you don't know, are the most important part of a newspaper. And I circled, for my own convenience, all the filler items that could be pulled out in case anything worth mentioning happened in Carmel City during the night. Not that it ever did or that it would tonight. Or so I thought.



I put the lighted candle stub at the foot of his bed

"We can catch these in the morning," I told Jerry. "Won't have to go back tonight. Did you lock up?"

He nodded and poured himself another drink.

"There was a phone call for you just after you left," he said.

"Who?"

"Wouldn't give a name. Said it wasn't important."

"That," I said firmly, "is the fallacy of civilized life, so-called, Jerry. Why should things be arbitrarily divided into things that are important and that aren't? How can anyone tell? What is important and what is unimportant?"

Jerry is a printer. "Well, Doc, it's important that we get the paper up, isn't it?" he said. "And unimportant what we do afterward."

"Not at all," I told him. "Just the opposite, in fact. We get the blamed paper out of the way solely so we can do what we please afterward. That's what's important—if anything is."

JERRY shook his head slowly. "You're really not sure anything is, are you, Doc?" He picked up his drink and stared at it. "How's about death? Isn't that?"

"Somebody you like," I said. "His death can be important to you. But not your own. Jerry, there's one thing sure. If you were to die right now, you'd never live to regret it."

"Poor Doc," he said, downed his drink and stood up. "Well, I'm going home. I suppose you'll get tight, as usual."

"Unless I think of a better idea," I agreed. "And I haven't yet. So long, Jerry."

"So long, Doc."

I stared for a while at the calendar over the bar. It had the kind of picture on it that you usually see on calendars over bars. It was just a bit of bother to keep my eyes focused properly, although I hadn't had enough to drink to affect my mind at all.

One corner of my mind persisted in wondering if I could get Beal Brothers Store to continue running a half-column ad instead of going back to six inches. I tried to squelch the thought by telling myself I didn't care whether anybody advertised in the Courier or not. Or whether the Courier kept on being published. I didn't, much.

The picture on the calendar got on my nerves. "Smiley, there aren't any women like that," I said. "It's a lie. You ought to take it down."

"Women like what? Take what down?"

"Never mind, Smiley," I said. After all, the picture was a dream. Somebody's dream of what something ought to be like.

The air was hot and close, and Smiley was rattling glasses, washing them, back of the bar.

I turned around and looked out the window, and a car with two dead men in it went by. But I didn't know that, although I had a feeling of wide-awareness that should have told me, if there's anything in prescience.

"There goes Barnaby Jones to the bank," I told Smiley. That was all it meant to me.

"The bank?" Smiley answered. "Ain't it closed?"

I looked at him to see whether he was kidding, and then remembered he hadn't any sense of humor. But I thought everyone in town knew about the Barnaby Jones Company payroll. Old man Barnaby's shoe factory was in the next town, but he banked in Carmel City, where he lived, and every first and fifteenth he took the payroll over himself. Two trips, one for the day shift and one for the night shift. Miles Harrison had to strap on a gun and go with Barnaby over to the bank for the money and then guard him on the way.

"The bank opens up any time Barnaby Jones wants it to, Smiley," I explained. "Tonight's payroll."

"Oh," Smiley said, and laughed. I wanted to choke him.

Maybe there was something important, after all, I decided—a sense of humor. That was why I never stayed at Smiley's on Thursday evenings. I always bought a bottle and went home where my bookcase gives me the best company there is.

I bought a bottle and started home with it. It was still fairly early evening, but the streets were dark.

Darker than I thought.

CHAPTER II

Smell of Blood

Beware the Jabberwock, my son!

The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!

Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun

The frumious Bandersnatch!

MAYBE I weaved just a little along the sidewalk, for at this stage I'm never quite as sober as I am later on. But the mind—ah, it was a combination of crystal clarity with fuzziness around the edges. It's hard to explain or define, but that's a state of mind which makes even Carmel City tolerable.

Down Oak Street past the corner drug-store, Pop Hinkle's place, where I used to drink cokes as a youngster, past Gorham's Feed Store, where I'd worked summers while I was going to college, past the bank, with Barnaby Jones' Packard still standing in front of it, past the Bijou, past Hank Greeber's undertaking parlor—beg pardon—H.

Greeber, Mortician, past Bing Crosby-Dorothy Lamour at the Alhambra, with a lot of cars parked in front, and I recognized Alvin Carey's even with the klaxon silent—a big contrast from the sedate black Packard his uncle used, back at the bank—past Deek's music store, where I'd once bought a violin, past the courthouse, with a light still burning in the room I knew was the office of Pete Lane, the sheriff.

I almost turned in there, from force of habit, to see if there was any news. Then I remembered it was Thursday night, and kept on walking.

Out of the store district now, past the house Elsie had lived in and died in, while we were engaged, past the house Elmer Conlin had lived in when I bought the Courier from him—past my whole blasted life, on the way home.

But with a bottle in my pocket and good company waiting for me there, my old tried-and-true friends in the bookcase. Reading a book is almost like listening to the man who wrote it talk. Except that you don't have to be polite. You can take your shoes off and put your feet up on the table and drink and forget who you are.

And forget the newspaper that hung around your neck like a millstone every day and night of the week except this one.

So to the corner of Campbell Street and my turning.

My house ahead, with no lights waiting. But on the porch a shadow moved.

And came forward as I mounted the steps. The dim light from the street lamp back on the corner showed me a strange, pudgy little man. My own height, perhaps, but seeming shorter because of his girth. Light, insufficient to show his features clearly, nevertheless reflected glowing pin-points in his eyes, a cat-like gleam. Yet there was nothing sinister about him. A small, pudgy man is never sinister, no matter where nor when, nor how his eyes look.

"You are Doctor Bagden?" he inquired.

"Doc Bagden," I corrected him. "But not a doctor—of medicine. If you are looking for a doctor, you've got the wrong place."

"No, I am aware that you are not a medico, Doctor. Ph.D., Harvard, 1913, I believe. Author of 'Lewis Carroll Through the Looking-Glass,' and 'Red Queen and White Queen.'"

It almost sobered me. Not that he had the right year of my magna cum laude, but the rest of it. The Lewis Carroll thing had been a brochure of a dozen pages, printed eighteen years ago, and not over five hundred copies run off. If one existed anywhere outside my own library, it was a surprise to me. And the "Red Queen and White Queen" article had appeared at least ten years ago in an obscure magazine long discontinued and forgotten.

"Why, yes," I said. "What can I do for you, Mr.—?"

"Smith," he said gravely, and then chuckled. "And the first name is Yehudi."

"No!" I said.

"Yes. You see, Doctor Bagden, I was named forty years ago when the name Yehudi, although uncommon, did not connote what it connotes today. My parents were not psychic, you see. Had they guessed the difficulty I might have in convincing people that I am not spoofing them when I tell them my given name—" He laughed ruefully. "I always carry cards."

He handed me one. It read:

YEHUDI SMITH

There was no address. Absently, I stuck it in my pocket.

"There's Yehudi Menuhin, the violinist, you know," he said. "And there's—"

"Stop, please," I said, "you're making it plausible. I liked it better the other way."

He smiled. "I have not misjudged you then. Have you ever heard of the Vorpall Blades?"

"Plural? No. Of course in Jabberwocky—in 'Alice Through the Looking Glass,' there's a line about a— Great Scott! Why are we talking about vorpall blades on my front porch? Come on in. I have a bottle, and I presume it would be superfluous to ask a man who talks about vorpall blades whether he drinks."

I UNLOCKED the front door and stepped in first to light the hall light. Then I ushered him back to my den. I swept the litter off the table—it's the one room my housekeeper, who comes in for a few hours every day—is forbidden to clean, and I brought glasses and filled them.

"Take that chair," I said. "This is the one I drink in. And now, Mr. Smith—to Lewis Carroll."

He raised his glass.

"To Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, known as Lewis Carroll when in Wonderland," he said.

We put down our glasses empty, and I filled them. I was more than glad I'd brought home a quart. There was a warm glow in my body—the glow I'd lost on the long walk home.

"And now," I said, "what of vorpall blades?"

"It's an organization, Doctor. A very small one, but just possibly a very important one. The Vorpall Blades."

"Admirers of Lewis Carroll, I take it?"

"Well, yes, but—" His voice became cautious—"much more than that. I feel that I should tell you something. It's dangerous. I mean, really dangerous."

"That," I said, "is marvelous. Wonderful.

Go on."

He didn't. He sat there and toyed with his glass a while and didn't look at me. I studied his face. It was an interesting face, and there were deep laughter-lines around his eyes and his mouth. He wasn't quite as young as I thought he was. One would have to laugh a long time to etch lines like those.

But he wasn't laughing now. He looked dead serious, and if he was faking, he was good. He looked serious, and he didn't look crazy. But he said something strange.

"You've studied Dodgson's fantasies thoroughly, Doctor. I've read your articles on them. Has it ever occurred to you that—that maybe they aren't fantasies?"

I nodded. "You mean symbolically, of course. Yes, fantasy is often closer to fundamental truth than fact."

"I don't mean that, Doctor. I mean—we think that Charles Dodgson had knowledge of another world and creatures of that world, and had entry into it, somehow. We think—"

The phone rang. Impatiently, I went out into the hall and answered it.

"Bagden speaking," I said.

"This is Evers, Doc. You sober?"

"Why?" I asked.

"You offered to sell me the Courier last week. I've been thinking it over. Seriously."

"I'll talk it over with you tomorrow, Evers," I told him. "Tonight I'm busy. I have a guest, and anyway if I talked to you tonight, I'd be tempted to sell the Courier for fifteen cents."

"And tomorrow?"

"At least twenty cents. Providing you take over the debts. But I can't talk now, honestly. I got to see a man about a Jabberwock."

"You are drunk, Doc."

"Not yet, and you're keeping me from it. 'Night."

I put the receiver back on the hook and went back to the den. I poured two more drinks before I sat down.

"Let's get one thing straight," I said. "Is this a roundabout way of selling me an insurance policy or something?"

"I assure you I have nothing to sell. Nor am I crazy, I hope. If I am, I have company. There are several of us, and we have checked our findings very thoroughly. One of us—" He paused with dramatic effect. "—checked them too thoroughly, without taking proper precautions. That is why there is a vacancy in our small group."

"You mean—what?"

He pulled a wallet from his pocket and from an inner compartment took a newspaper clipping, a short one of about four paragraphs. He handed it to me. I read it, and I recognized the type and the set-up, a clipping from the Bridgeport Argus. And

I remembered now having read it, a few days ago. I'd considered clipping it as an exchange item, and then decided not to. The heading read as follows:

MAN SLAIN BY UNKNOWN BEAST

It had caught my eye and interest. The rest of the article brought matters down to prosaic facts.

A man named Colin Hawks, a recluse, had been found dead along a path through the woods. The man's throat had been torn, and police opinion was that a large and vicious dog had attacked him. But the reporter who wrote the article suggested the possibility that only a wolf or possibly even a lion or panther, escaped from a circus, could have caused the wounds.

I folded the article up again and handed it back to Smith. It didn't mean or prove anything, of course. Anybody could have clipped that article from a newspaper and used it to help substantiate a wild yarn. Undoubtedly somebody's vicious police dog, on the loose, had done the killing.

BUT something prickled at the back of my neck.

Funny what that word "unknown" and the thought back of it can do to you. If that story had told of a man killed by a dog or by a lion, either one, there's nothing more than ordinarily frightening about it. But if the man who writes the article doesn't know what it was did the killing and calls it an "unknown beast"—well, if you've got imagination, you'll see what I mean.

"You mean this man who was killed was one of your members?" I said.

"Yes. Are you willing to take his place?"

Silly, but there was that darned chill down my spine again. Was I alone here in the house with a madman?

He didn't look mad.

Funny, I thought, here I don't like life particularly. But now suddenly pops up danger, and I'm afraid. Afraid of what? A madman—or a Jabberwock?

And the absurdity of that brought me back to sanity and I wanted to laugh. I didn't, of course. I was host and even if fear of his slitting my throat wouldn't keep me from laughing at a possible madman, then politeness would.

Besides, hadn't I been bored stiff for years? With Carmel City and with myself and with everything in it? Now something screwball was happening and was I going to funk out before I got to first base?

I picked up my glass.

"If I say yes?" I asked.

"There is a meeting tonight, later. We will go to it. There you will learn what we are doing. The results, thus far, of our research."

"Where is the meeting to be held?"

"Near here. I came up from New York to attend it. I have directions to guide me to a house on a road called the Dartown Pike. About six miles out from Carmel City. My car will get us there, or get me there alone, if you do not care to come."

The Dartown Pike, I thought, about six miles out from here.

"You wouldn't by any chance be referring to the Wentworth Place?"

"That's the name. Wentworth. You know it?"

Right then and there, if it hadn't been for the drinks I'd taken, I should have seen that this was all too good to be true. I should have smelled blood.

"We'll have to take candles," I said. "Or flashlights. That house has been empty since I was a kid. We used to call it a haunted house. Would that be why you chose it?"

"Of course, Doctor. You are not afraid to go?"

Afraid to go? Gosh, yes, I was afraid to go.

"Gosh, no," I said.

CHAPTER III

Appointment with Death

He took his vorpal sword in hand:

Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

PERHAPS I was a bit more drunk than I thought. I remember how utterly crystal clear my mind was, and that's always a sign. There's nothing more crystal clear than a prism that makes you see around corners.

It was three drinks later. I was interested particularly in the way Smith took those drinks. A little tilt to the glass and it was gone. Like a conjuring trick. He could take a drink of whisky neat with hardly a pause in his talking.

I can't do that, myself. Maybe because I don't really like the taste of whisky.

"Look at the dates," he was saying. "Charles Dodgson published 'Alice in Wonderland' in Eighteen Sixty-three and 'Through the Looking-Glass' in Seventy-one, eleven years later. He was only thirty-two or thereabouts when he wrote the Wonderland book, but he was already on the trail of something. You know what he had published previously?"

"I'm afraid I don't remember," I told him.

"In Eighteen Sixty, five years before, he'd written and published 'A Syllabus of Plane Algebraic Geometry' and only a year later his 'Formulae of Plane Trigonometry.' I don't suppose you have ever read them?"



I bent over Smith and felt for his heart

I shook my head. "Math has always been beyond me."

"Then you haven't read his 'Elementary Treatise on Determinants,' either, I suppose. Nor his 'Curiosa Mathematica'? Well, you shall read the latter. It's non-technical, and most of the clues to the fantasies are contained in it. There are further references in his 'Symbolic Logic,' published in Eighteen Ninety-six, just two years before his death, but they are less direct."

"Now, wait a minute," I said, "if I understand you correctly, your thesis is that Lewis Carroll—I can't seem to think of him as Dodgson—worked out through mathematics and symbolic logic the fact that there is another—uh—plane of existence. A through-the-looking-glass plane of fantasy, a dream plane—is that it?"

"Exactly, Doctor. A dream plane. That is about as near as it can be expressed in our language. Consider dreams. Aren't they the almost-perfect parallel of the Alice adventures? The wool-and-water sequence where everything Alice looks at changes. Remember in the shop, with the sheep knitting, how whenever Alice looked hard at any shelf to make sure what was on it, that shelf was always empty although the others around it were crowded full?"

"'Things flow about so here,' was her comment," I said. "And the sheep asks if she can row and hands her a pair of knitting needles, and they turn into oars in her hands, and she's in a boat."

"Exactly, Doctor. A perfect dream sequence. And the poem Jabberwocky, the high point of the second book in my estimation, is in the very language of dreams. 'Frumious,' 'manxome,' 'tulgey'—words that give you a vague picture, in context, but that you can't put your finger on. Like something you hear in a dream, and understand, but which is meaningless when you awaken."

BETWEEN "manxome" and "tulgey" he'd downed his latest drink. I replenished his glass and mine.

"But why postulate the reality of such a world?" I asked him. "I see the parallel, of course. The Jabberwock itself is the epitome of dream-creatures, of nightmare. With eyes of flame, jaws that bite and claws that catch, it whiffles and burbles—Freud and James Joyce, in tandem, couldn't do any better than that. But why isn't a dream a dream? Why talk of getting through to it, except in the sense that we invade that world nightly in our dreams? Why assume it's more real than that?"

"You'll hear evidence of that tonight, Doctor. Mathematical evidence—and, I hope, further actual proof. The calculations are there, the methods, in *Curiosa Mathematica*. Dodgson was a century ahead of his time, Dr. Bagden. Have you read of the

recent experiments with the subconscious of Leibnitz and Winton? They're putting forth feelers in the right direction—the mathematical approach.

"You see, only recently, aside from a rare exception like Dodgson, has science realized the possibility of parallel planes of existence, existences like nested Chinese boxes, one inside the other. With gaps between that consciousness, the mind can bridge in sleep under the influence of drugs. Why do the Chinese use opium except to bridge that gap? If the mind can bridge it, why not the body?"

"Down a rabbit-hole," I suggested. "Or through a looking-glass."

He waved a pudgy hand. "Both symbolic. But both suggestive of formulae you'll find in his Syllabus, formulae that have puzzled mathematicians."

I won't try to repeat the rest of what he told me. Partly, if not mainly, because I don't remember it. It was over my head and sounded like Einstein on a binge.

This must have been partly because I was getting drunker. At times there was a mistiness about the room and the man across the table from me seemed to come closer and then recede, his face to become clear and then to blur. And at times his voice was a blur of sines and cosines.

I gave up trying to follow.

He was a screwball, and so was I, and we were going to a haunted house to meet other screwballs and to try something crazy. I'm not certain whether we were going to try to fish a Bandersnatch out of limbo or to break through a looking-glass veil ourselves and go hunting one in its native element. Among the slithy toves in the wabe.

I didn't care which. It was crazy, of course, but I was having the best time I'd had since the Halloween almost forty years ago when we—but never mind that. It's a sign of old age to reminisce about one's youth, and I'm not old yet.

But part of the mistiness in the room was smoke. I hadn't opened the window and I looked across at it now and wondered if I wanted it opened badly enough to get up and cross the room.

A black square, that window, in the wall of this lighted room. A square of glass against which pressed murder and the monstrous night. As I watched it, I heard the town clock strike ten times. I reached for my glass and then pulled back my hand. I'd had enough, or too much, already for ten o'clock in the evening.

The window. A black square!

We are not clairvoyant.

Out there in the night a man, a man I knew, lay dead with his skull bashed in and blood and brains mixing with his matted hair. The pistol butt was raised to strike the other man's head.

A third murder was planned, already committed in a warped brain.

Ten o'clock, the hour they would ask an alibi.

"I was with Yehudi," I would say.

Who's Yehudi?

Oh, if murder was ever funny, this set-up was funny. Some day when I'm as drunk again as I was at ten o'clock that evening, I'll be able to laugh at it.

Murder and the monstrous night.

But I merely decided that the smoke was too thick after all, and I got up and opened the window. I could still walk straight.

Men were being murdered, and Smith spoke. "We'll have to leave soon," he said.

"Have another drink," I asked him. "I'm ahead of you. I drank at Smiley's."

He shook his head. "I've got to drive."

I stood at the window and the cool air made me feel a bit less fuzzy. I took in deep draughts of it. Then, because if I left it wide open the room would be too cool when I returned, I pushed it down again to within an inch or two of the sill.

And there was my reflection again. An insignificant little man with graying hair, and glasses, and a necktie badly askew.

I GRINNED at my reflection. "You blasted fool, you," I thought to myself. "Going out with a madman to hunt Jabberwocks. At your age."

The reflection straightened its necktie, and grinned back. It was probably thinking:

"You are old, Father William," the young man said.

"And your hair has become very white.
And yet you incessantly stand on your head.
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

Well, maybe it wasn't, but I hadn't stood on my head for a long time and maybe this was the last chance I'd ever have.

Over my shoulder, in the mirror of the window-glass, I could see Smith getting to his feet. "Ready to go?" he asked.

I turned around and looked at him, at his bland, round face, at the laughter-tracks in the corners of his eyes, at the rotund absurdity of his body.

And an impulse made me walk over and hold out my hand to him and shake his hand when he put it in mine rather wonderingly. We hadn't shaken hands when we'd introduced ourselves on the porch, and something made me do it now.

Just an impulse, but one I'm very glad I followed.

"Mr. Smith, frankly I don't follow or swallow your theory about Lewis Carroll," I said. "I'm going with you, although I don't expect any Jabberwocks. But even so, you've given me the most enjoyable evening I've had in a good many years. I want to thank

you for it, in case I forget later. I'm taking the bottle along."

Yes, I'm glad I said that. Often after people are dead, you think of things you'd like to have said to them while you had the chance. For once, I said it in time.

He looked pleased as could be.

"Thanks, Doc," he said, shortening the title into a nickname for the first time. But also, for the first time, his eyes didn't quite meet mine.

We went out to his car, and got in.

It's odd how clearly you remember some things and how vague other things are. I remember that there was a green bulb on the speedometer on the dashboard of that car, and that the gear-shift lever knob was brightly polished onyx. But I don't remember what make of car it was, nor even whether it was a coupe or a sedan.

I remember directing him across town to the Dartown Pike, but I can't for the life of me recall which of several possible routes we took.

But then we were out of town on the pike, purring along through the night with the yellow headlight-beams cutting long spreading swaths through the black dark.

"We've clocked five and a half miles from the town limits," Smith said. "You know the place? Must be almost there."

"Next driveway on your right," I told him.

Gosh, but the place must be old, I thought.

It was an old house forty years ago when I was a boy of twelve. It had been empty then. My dad's farm had been a mile closer to town, and Johnny Haskins, who lived on the next farm, and I had explored it several times. In daylight. Johnny had been killed in France in 1917. In daytime, I hope, because he'd always been afraid of the dark. I'd picked up a little of that fear from him, and had kept it for quite a few years after I grew up.

But not any more. Older people never stay afraid. By the time you pass the fifty mark, you've known so many people who are now dead that ghosts, if there were such things, aren't such strangers. You'd find too many friends among them.

"This it?" Smith asked.

"Yes," I said.

CHAPTER IV

Bottle from Wonderland

And as in uffish thought he stood,

The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffing through the tulgey wood
And burbled as it came!

WE STOOD in front of the house that had been the bugaboo of my childhood,

and it looked just about as it had looked then.

I ran the beam of my flashlight up on the porch, and it seemed that not a board had changed.

Just imagination, of course. It had been lived in for twenty years since then. Colonel Wentworth had bought it in about 1915 and had lived there until he died eight years ago. But during those eight years it had stood empty and again it had gone to rack and ruin.

"The others aren't here yet," Smith said. "But let's go in."

We went up on the creaking porch and found the door was not locked. The beams of our flashlights danced ahead of us down the long dimness of the hallway.

Was someone else really coming here tonight? I wondered. Again that prickle of danger roughed the hair on the back of my neck. Undoubtedly I was a fool to have come here with a man I didn't know. But there was nothing dangerous about Smith, I felt sure. Crackpot he might be, but not a homicidal one.

We turned into a huge living room on the left of the hallway. There was furniture there, white-sheeted. But the sheets were not too dirty nor was there much dust anywhere. Apparently the inside of the place, at least, was being cared for.

Furniture under white muslin has a ghostly look.

I took the bottle out of my pocket and held it out to Smith, but he shook his head silently.

But I took a drink from it. The warm feeling began to drive the cold one from the pit of my stomach.

I didn't dare get sober now, I told myself, or I'd start wondering what I was doing there.

I heard the sound of a car turning in the driveway.

Or so it seemed. For we stood quiet a long time and nothing happened. No footsteps on the porch, no more car-sound. I began to wonder if I'd been mistaken.

Maybe a minute passed, maybe an hour. I took another drink.

Smith had laid his flashlight on top of the bureau, with the switch turned on, pointed diagonally across the room. The furniture made huge black shadows on the wall. He stood in the middle of the room and when he turned to face me the flashlight was full in his face.

He looked a bit scared himself, until he smiled.

"They'll be here soon, I'm sure," he said.

"How many are coming?" For some reason we were both talking softly, almost in whispers.

I was finding it hard, deucedly hard, to keep my eyes in focus on his face. It was an effort to stand up straight, and I took

a step backward so I could lean against the wall. Somehow, I didn't want to sit down in one of those sheeted chairs.

I didn't feel any too good, now. I wished I was back home, so I could lie down for a while and let the bed go around in soothing circles.

Smith didn't seem to hear my question about how many were coming. Again I thought the engine of a car was running, but Smith turned and walked to the window, and the sound of his footsteps drowned the noise, if there was any noise.

When he reached the window, he stopped and I heard it again, distinctly. A car, if my ears told me aright, was driving away from the house. Had someone come, and gone? Finally the sound died away.

It didn't make sense, but then what did?

I was tired of listening to nothing and looking at Smith's back. He kept staring at the blank, black pane of window as though he could see out of it. I was sure he couldn't.

For no particular reason, I took another look around the room.

In the shadows of one corner there was a single article of furniture that was not covered by a dust sheet. It was a glass-topped table. A small, round three-legged affair, like a magician's table. There was something on it that I couldn't make out.

I looked away, and then, because something about it haunted me, I looked back. Where had I seen a table like that before? Somewhere.

No, a picture of one. I remembered now.

In the John Tenniel illustrations of Alice in Wonderland, of course. The glass-topped table Alice had found in the hall at the bottom of the rabbit hole. The table on which stood a little bottle with a label tied around the neck.

I walked over and, yes, there were two things on the table, as there should have been. A bottle and a key. The key was a small Yale key, and the bottle was really a vial, about two inches high, just as in the Tenniel picture.

THE label, of course, said "Drink me." I picked the bottle up and looked at it unbelievably, and I became aware that Smith was standing at my elbow. He must have heard me walking across the room and left the window.

He reached out, took the bottle from my hand and looked at it. He nodded.

"They've been here, then," he said.

"Who? You mean this—the table and the key and all—is part of—uh—what we came here for?"

He nodded again. "They brought this, and left it."

He loosened the cork in the bottle as he spoke.

"I'm sorry, Doc," he said. "I can't let you

have the honor. But you're not really a member yet and—well—I am!"

He put the bottle to his lips and drank it off with the same quick motion he'd used in polishing off the whiskys I'd given him back in my room.

Don't ask me what I expected to happen. Whether I expected him to shut up like a telescope and shrink to about ten inches high, just the right height to go through the little door into the garden, I can't say. Only, like Alice, he'd neglected to take the key off the table first.

I don't know what I expected to happen. But nothing happened. He put the bottle back down on the table and went right on with what he'd been saying.

"When you have met the others and have been accepted, you may, if you wish, try out our—"

And then he died.

What the poison was, I don't know, but its action was sudden despite the fact that it had not paralyzed his lips or mouth. He died before he even started to fall. I could tell it by the sudden utter blankness of his face.

The thud of his fall actually shook the floor.

I bent over and shoved my hand inside his coat and shirt and his heart wasn't beating. I waited a while to be sure.

I stood up again, and my knees were wobbly.

If he'd tried to poison me! But he hadn't. He drunk it himself, and his death had been murder and not suicide. Nobody, no matter how mad he might be, would ever commit suicide in the offhand manner in which he'd tossed off the contents of that bottle.

The empty bottle had jarred off the table and was lying on the floor beside him and my eyes went from it back to the glass table and the key. I picked the key up and looked at it.

It was a false note, that key. It should have been a gold key, and small as it was, it should have been smaller. And not a Yale key. But maybe it opened something.

What good is a key without a lock? I stuck it absently into my pocket and looked down again at Smith.

He was still dead.

And it was then that I got scared and ran. I'd seen dead men before, plenty of them, and it wasn't Smith I was afraid of.

It was the utter complete screwiness of everything that had been happening this mad night.

That, and the fact that I was alone. In a haunted house, too! Like all cynics who don't believe in haunted houses, I have a good deal of respect for them.

I stumbled and fell in the darkness of the hallway, and then remembered the flashlight in my hip pocket, and put it into action. I got out the door and off the porch before I even wondered where I was going, or why.

The police, of course. I'd have to get word to Sheriff Pete Lane as soon as I possibly could. I considered knocking someone awake in a nearby farmhouse and telephoning, but it would be quicker, in the long run, to take Smith's car and drive the six miles back to town. I could do that in fifteen minutes and it might take twice that long to find a telephone.

Beyond this, beyond notifying the sheriff, I wasn't thinking yet.

I had a hunch that if I thought about what had happened and tried to figure out what it was all meant and why that DRINK ME bottle had been poison, I'd have gone off my rocker.

The less thinking I did before I talked to Pete Lane, the better off I'd be.

So I flashlighted my way around the corner of the house to where we'd left the car, and I got another jolt.

The car was there, or a car was there. But it was my own car, not the one Smith had driven me out in. My own Plymouth coupe, which up to that afternoon, had been out in my garage on blocks, with the air let out of the tires. There'd been only a few miles left in those tires anyway and I'd decided to save those few miles for something

[Turn page]

SEEING-BELIEVING

THIRST-RELIEVING

What happens when you look at the circles
(and move your head from side to side?)



ANSWER

The circles spin like a wheel.



important, if anything important ever came up.

WELL, something important had come up, and here was my car. There was air in the tires, too. And gas in the tank, probably, unless somebody had towed it there.

I walked around it warily, almost expecting to see it vanish in a puff of smoke or to find the March Hare or the Mock Turtle seated behind the steering wheel. Those drinks were still with me.

But there wasn't anyone behind the steering wheel, and I got in. I flicked on the dashboard lights and looked at the gas gauge, and there were three gallons in the tank.

Could I have been driven here in my own car without realizing it? No, I remembered that onyx gear shift knob, and the green light on the dashboard of the other car. And the instrument panel had been different. I was sure of that.

I took a deep breath and started the engine. It purred smoothly, and I eased the coupe out to the road and aimed it south for town.

I think I might have driven wide open if it hadn't been my own car. But the familiar feel of it sobered me a little more and that was just enough to realize how drunk I still was. The road ahead seemed like a weaving ribbon at times. And one of those tires might give way any minute.

I parked in front of the courthouse, and there was still a light on in the sheriff's office.

I started in, but stopped in the doorway long enough to take another drink. This wasn't going to be easy.

Pete Lane was talking on the telephone when I went into his office.

"You're blamed right, we're trying," he said into the mouth-piece. "I got two of my own men on it, and I've just notified the state police. Huh? No, we ain't told anybody else yet. No use doing that till we find 'em."

He hung up the receiver and looked at me. He looked angry and harassed. "What the devil do you want, Doc?" he said.

"I got to report a murder," I said. I closed the door and leaned against it. Then I was catapulted nearly off my feet and onto the sheriff's desk as the door opened violently from the outside. Harry Bates came in. He had his clothes on over his pajamas, for the bottoms of them showed below his trouser cuffs. His shoes weren't tied.

"Walter just phoned from Burlington," Bates said. "Your line was busy so I took it on the switchboard. He didn't find much."

Pete interrupted him. "Just a minute, Harry. What's this about a murder, Doc?"

"Out at the old Wentworth place on the road to Burlington. There's a man dead there."

"Is it Jones?"

"Jones?" The name didn't register with me. "No. His name was Smith, not Jones. Or that's what he told me. His first name was a funny one."

I didn't quite dare. There was the card Smith had given me, in my pocket. I handed it to Pete.

He looked at it and let out a howl.

"Yehudi?" he yelled. "Doc, if this is a rib, I'm going to smack you."

I sat down on the corner of the desk because I felt safer sitting down.

"It's no rib, darn it," I told him. "He got me out there with him, and then he took poison out of a bottle that we found."

Pete wasn't even listening to me. He was staring at the card I'd handed him, suddenly he looked up.

"Doc, what's your bug number?" he asked me.

"My bug number?" For an awful instant I thought he was crazy too. Then I remembered that some people call the union label—that tiny device which, with the number of the shop, must appear on every job printed in a union print shop—the "bug."

"Seventeen," I told him, and he cursed.

"Doc, you printed this yourself," he said. He cursed again. "Yehudi! Doc, if you weren't drunk, I'd ram your teeth down your throat for barging in here like this. We got trouble, and I mean trouble. Barnaby Jones started for Burlington with his payroll, taking Miles Harrison along, three hours ago, and didn't show up there. Three hours, and it's only twenty miles. Get the devil out of here."

I didn't move.

"Pete, sure I'm drunk," I said. "But blast your hide, you've known me all your life, and would I pull a gag about something like this? I tell you there's a dead man at the Wentworth place. I went there with him. I'd never seen him before tonight."

"What'd you go there for?"

Although the incredulity had left his voice, I knew it wasn't the time to say why we went there. I could imagine his face if I told him a tenth of it.

"That's not important, now," I said. "Man, this is a murder. Come out there with me and I'll show you the body."

"Just a minute, Doc. Harry, is Walter still on the line?"

"He's waiting for us to call him back with instructions. Here's the number." He put a slip of paper on Pete's desk.

"Walter's got to drive past the Wentworth house anyway. I'll have him look in. What room?"

"Living room," I said. "Middle room on the north side, downstairs. He'll find a body on the floor, and he'll find a glass table, and a bottle lying by the body, with a label."

But I stopped just in time. Whew! Pete Lane picked up the phone and asked for Burlington.

CHAPTER V

Head on a Platter

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

NO, I didn't feel good. In fact, I felt goofy.

But I sat in a chair back in the corner of Pete's office, with Pete barking orders to half a dozen people, in person and over the phone, and I felt glad that he was paying no attention to me.

He was holding my case in abeyance as being less important than the disappearance of Barnaby Jones and Miles Harrison. Maybe he had it down as a figment of my drunken imagination.

I kept wishing that he was right, but I knew better.

As soon as he got the report from Walter that the body was really there, he'd swarm all over me with questions. But I was only too glad to wait because then—with a body in hand, so to speak—the answers I'd have to give him would sound a lot more plausible.

The office was taking on a fuzzy look, and my tongue was starting to feel like an angora kitten. It was easier to keep my eyes shut than try to make them see straight. All I really wanted was to get this over with, go home and slide into bed.

But I heard Pete walking out of the office and opened my eyes and stood up. There was one thing I felt curious about and now was the time to find out. I walked over to his desk and picked up the Yehudi Smith calling card. I held it close to my eyes, and—yes, there was the little union label in the corner and the number seventeen under it. Either it had been printed in my own shop, or someone had gone to a little trouble to make it seem that it had. The type was ten-point Garamond. I had Garamond in stock.

I was putting the card down thoughtfully when Pete came back and saw me.

"What's the idea of that card?" he asked.

"I was just wondering," I told him. "I didn't print it, and Jerry Klosterman didn't either, or I'd have seen the order for it. I'd remember a name like that."

He laughed without humor. "Who wouldn't. Listen, Doc, I've done everything I can do at the moment about the

Jones and Harrison business. The search is organized, and we'll find them. But until then—well, let's get back to this Wentworth place business. You say a man you don't know took you out there?"

I nodded.

"Anyone see him with you? What I mean is—can you prove it?"

"No, Pete. You'll have to take my word for it. That and the fact that he's still out there, dead."

"We'll skip that till I get the report. This card?" He looked at it and scowled. "Any other souvenirs?"

I shook my head, and then remembered.

"This," I said, and took the key from my pocket and handed it to him. Again, somehow, it looked familiar. But all Yale keys look alike. Still, the minute I'd given it to him, I wished I hadn't. It would probably turn out to open something at the Courier office. It might be a phoney as that calling card.

"He gave you this key?" Pete asked.

"No, not exactly. I found it at the Wentworth house, but it may not be important."

Walter Hanswert came in without knocking. Walter is the man who does most of the work for the sheriff's office, but Pete Lane has the job and draws the pay. You'll find some hardworking horse like Walter back of every politically-elected sheriff, or else the mechanism of law and order goes to pot.

"Anything?" Pete said.

"Not a lead, Pete. I drove slow all the way back from Burlington, looking for any place a car might have skidded off the road or any sign of something to help us. No dice."

"How about the Wentworth house, Walter?"

"I stopped there. Not a thing. I went through it fast, from attic to cellar."

Maybe you stop being surprised after a while. This didn't really jar me.

"Walter, were you in the living room?" I said. "Didn't you find a glass table and a bottle on the floor?"

"Nope. That's the room Pete said to search. I even looked under all the dust covers. Couple of tables there, cloth-covered, but neither of them glass, and no bottle. Front door of the house was open."

"I left it open, I guess," I said.

My knees were getting that way again. I didn't want to argue, but I had to.

"Cuss it, Pete!" I cried. "There was a body there. Somebody took it away. Heaven knows why. Heaven knows what any of this is all about, but I didn't imagine they'd clean up things so quick."

He put a gentle hand on my shoulder. "Doc, Walter will drive you home. Sleep it off."

THE word "sleep" got me. Oh, I knew quite well that I wasn't going to sleep off what had happened. But I could, and wanted to, sleep off this fuzziness. Tomorrow, in the clear light of day, maybe I could add things up and make sense out of them.

A few hours' sleep, I told myself, just two or three hours, and everything might look different.

"Okay, Pete," I said. "Perhaps you're right."

"Got your car here?"

"In front." I should have left it go at that, but my tongue was loose. "We took Smith's car out to the Wentworth's place, but mine was out there after he was killed. I don't know how that happened."

"Just a minute," said Pete. His face looked different. "Your car's really downstairs? I thought you had it blocked up? You had it out tonight?"

"Yes and no, Pete. I didn't take it out of the garage but it's out just the same."

"It's in front," Walter said. "I saw it."

Pete Lane looked at his assistant, and then back at me. "And you had it out on the Dartown Pike tonight, Doc?"

"I told you that," I said impatiently. I didn't know what he was getting at, but I didn't like the way he was doing it.

"Doc, you never liked Barnaby Jones, did you?"

"Barnaby?" I was surprised. "He's a stuffed shirt and a miser and a prig. No, I don't like him. Why?"

He didn't answer. He leaned back against the desk and stared into the far corner of the room, with his lips pursed as though he was whistling, but no sound coming out of them.

When he spoke, he didn't look at me this time. And his voice was soft. Almost soothing.

"Doc, we're going to take a look at that car of yours," he said. "You can wait up. No, you come along with us, and then I'll drive you home."

I didn't get the idea, but I didn't care particularly. Just so I got home, and the sooner the better.

We went outside, Pete, Walter and I, and I noticed that they worked it so I walked between them.

My car was parked right outside the door, and the sheriff's car, which Walter had used to drive to Burlington and back, was in front of it. An open roadster with the top down.

Pete opened the door of my coupe and looked in. He pulled a flashlight out of his pocket and flashed it around inside, and looked carefully at the seat cushions and the floorboards. He looked carefully, but didn't seem to find anything.

He fished through an assortment of junk

in the glove compartment, and then reached into the door pocket. His face changed and he pulled his hand out slowly with a revolver in it. He held it by the cylinder, between his thumb and forefinger, just the way he'd first got hold of it.

"This yours, Doc?"

"No," I said.

He looked at me, hard, for a second or two and then sniffed at the end of the muzzle.

"Either hasn't been fired," he said, "or it's been cleaned." He was talking to Walter, not to me. "Let's look further."

He turned the gun over and held the lens of his flashlight close to the end of the butt. Even from where I stood back on the sidewalk I could see there was a smear there. A smear that might have been blood.

Pete Lane took a clean handkerchief from his pocket. It was folded and he shook it open and put it down on the running board of the coupe and laid the pistol gently on top of it.

"Where's the key to the rumble, Doc?" Pete asked me. "I'm afraid we'll have to look in there."

I shook my head. "Haven't got it. With me, I mean. When I blocked up the car, I took the keys off my ring and left them in the drawer of my desk. The one at home."

He turned and looked back in the car, aiming his flashlight at the instrument panel. The ignition key was in the lock there, but there were no other keys with it.

"That one isn't in your desk at home," said Pete. He walked around to the back of the car and stared at the lock in the handle of the rumble seat.

He looked at it a minute, then reached into his pocket and took out a key. The key I'd handed him. The key that had been on the glass table beside the "DRINK ME" bottle. The key that should have been the key to the little door into the garden where Alice had found the Two, Seven and Five of Hearts painting white roses red so the Queen wouldn't order their heads chopped off.

Pete put the key into the lock of the rumble seat and it fitted, and turned. He lifted the lid.

FROM where I stood, all I could see was a small brown leather grip, but I recognized it. It was the grip that Barnaby Jones used to carry the payroll money in, from Carmel City to Burlington.

But the grip wasn't resting on the seat. It was resting on something that was lying on the seat or it wouldn't have stuck up that way. I heard the hissing sound of Pete Lane sucking in his breath, and Walter Hanswert took a quick step to look down into the rumble seat, too.

I didn't. I didn't have to be sober to

guess what was in there, and I'd already seen one murdered man tonight.

Somebody had done a beautiful job of something. I'd come galumphing back from my date with a Jabberwock carrying, not its head, but my own, on a silver platter to the police.

And shades of Old Henderson, what a story I had to go with the bodies of Barnaby Jones and Miles Harrison! A story based on a little man named Yehudi—the little man who wasn't there! Yehudi whom no one but myself had ever seen. I'd given the sheriff my two souvenirs of the evening and one had been printed in my own shop and the other was the key to my own car and the incriminating evidence in it.

I don't know whether I was suddenly very drunk or very sober to do what I did. But like a flash of lightning I had a picture of myself in court or in alienist's office telling him about a glass-topped table and a bottle labeled "DRINK ME" and the death of Yehudi of the vanishing corpse.

I lunged for the running board of my coupe and got the pistol Pete had left there and forgotten for the moment in the excitement of his find in the rumble seat.

Pete yelled at Walter and Walter dived for me, but too late. I had straightened up with the pistol in my hand before he got within grabbing distance and he stepped back.

"Now, Doc," said Pete, in a wheedling voice, as one would use to a child. But there was fear in his eyes, plenty of it, although Walter's a brave man. He thought he was facing a homicidal maniac.

I didn't try to disillusion him. I didn't even have my finger inside the trigger guard. If he'd reached out and grasped the gun, I'd have let him take it.

"Step out from behind there, Pete," I said. "Both of you back into the courthouse."

I groped behind me and took the ignition key out of my own car and pocketed it. I wasn't going to take that car, with its ghastly burden. But I didn't want them to use it either.

I moved toward the sheriff's car while they sidled cautiously across the sidewalk toward the courthouse. I was gambling that Walter hadn't bothered to take the keys out when he'd come upstairs to report. And I was right.

They stepped through the doorway and the instant they were out of sight I heard running footsteps. Pete was sprinting for his office for his own gun, if I guessed correctly, and Walter would be taking the switchboard to block all the roads out of town.

That was all right by me. I wasn't going out of town. I put the murder gun down on the curb—I didn't want it any more than

I wanted my own car—and got in Pete's car and drove off.

CHAPTER VI

Hidden Foe

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

SWINGING around the corner, I gunned the engine to get up speed, and then shut it off. On momentum, I swung it into the alley back of the courthouse and let it coast to a stop.

Looking up, I could see the lighted window of Pete's room, and could imagine the frantic telephoning going on right now to stop and hold a car that would stand, probably unnoticed, for the rest of the night, right under his window.

I got out quietly by stepping over the door instead of opening it, and walked up the alley, going on tiptoe until I was out of earshot of the courthouse.

They'd be looking for me, I knew, at the outskirts of town, not in the middle of it. The place I had in mind ought to be safe for a couple of hours, at least. And I didn't care, beyond that. I wasn't making a getaway. I just wanted a chance to do a few chores and think out a few things before I gave myself up. Gave myself up, that is, unless I could work out my plans.

I went along the alley two blocks and turned in at the back door of Smiley's. Pete and his men, I felt sure, would be too busy to do any drinking for a while.

"Hi, Doc," Smiley said. "Thought you'd be asleep long ago." He laughed his meaningless laugh.

"Old Henderson, double," I said. "I've been asleep ever since I left here, Smiley. Maybe I can wake up. Leave that bottle on the bar."

There was a pinochle game in the back corner. Outside of that I had the place to myself.

I downed the double Henderson and felt a little better. I gave it time to get home and took another. There's a second-wind stage of inebriation, and hitting that was my only chance to get my mind hitting on six cylinders. Sobriety's good for thinking, too, but I hadn't a chance of getting sober for hours yet. The other way was quicker.

I looked at the calendar a while, but that didn't help. Things went in dizzying circles inside my head. Who's Yehudi? Where is what's left of him? Why did he drink the "DRINK ME"? Was he really expecting other members of some nitwit organiza-

tion to show up there?

Had he been kidding me, or was he being kidded?"

Jabberwocks. Glass tables with "DRINK ME" bottles and keys that should have been gold and led into a garden, but which were Yale and led into the nuthouse by way of a rumble seat. And of all names, Yehudi Smith!

Oh, it would have been funny, it would have been a wow of a practical joke, if there hadn't been three corpses cluttering up the scenery, and the fact that this meant the end of my freedom, whether I ended up in a bughouse or a hoosegow. Or at the end of a rope.

No, looking at the calendar didn't help.

"Give me a deck, Smiley," I said.

I took another drink while he got it, and deliberately I didn't think at all while I counted out the stacks for solitaire. Then, as I started the game, I let go. I mean, I didn't try to think, but I didn't try not to. I just relaxed.

Red queen on a black king. Wasn't the Red Queen the one who met Alice in the second square, and told her about the six squares she'd have to go through before she could be a queen herself?

And a black jack for the red queen.

But that was a red chess queen, not a card queen. The one who ran so fast. "A slow sort of country," she'd told Alice. "Now here, you see, it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place."

An ace up on top, and then I took another drink before I put the red six on the black seven. The cards looked different now—sharp of outline, crystal clear.

Like my mind felt. Ten on the jack.

Yehudi had been a pawn. A sucker, like me. Somebody had moved him. Somebody had hired him to come there and pull a razzle-dazzle on me. To give me a story that nobody'd believe in ten lifetimes, a story whose only proof was a card some friend of mine had printed in my own shop. Yehudi had been made as incredible as possible, from Christian name to "DRINK ME."

There was only one answer to Yehudi. A character actor at liberty, probably hired in New York and brought here for the purpose of framing me. And he framed himself. Given a set of instructions for the evening that included the planted drink-me bottle, and went beyond it, because he hadn't been told what was in that bottle.

So Yehudi wasn't in on the real play. Somebody had hired Yehudi to play what he thought was an elaborate practical joke.

Nine on the ten, and bring up a deuce for my ace on top.

SOMEBODY who knew me intimately, and who knew how I felt Thursday

evenings, and my predilection for Lewis Carroll and nonsense in general, and that I'd be sure to fall for a gag like Yehudi's. Someone who came to see me at the print shop and at home, once in a while, at least. Maybe to play chess with me?

Anyway, there was the other red queen.

"How you coming?" Smiley asked.

"I'm in the fifth square," I told him. "I crossed the third by railroad, with the Gnat. And I think I just crossed the brook into the fifth."

"Squares? There ain't any squares in solitaire?"

"Cards are rectangles," I said. "And what's a square but a rectangle somebody sat on? You're a swell guy, Smiley, but shut up."

He laughed and moved off down the bar.

I took another drink, but just a short one. The edges of the cards and the outlines of the pips on them were very sharp and clear now. No fuzziness, no muzziness.

Another ace for the top row.

Because, if the money was still in that bag that was planted in my car, there was only one person who benefited by what had happened tonight. The man who'd inherit Barnaby Jones' factory and his fortune. The one man who'd need a scapegoat, because of his a priori motive.

That was the sixth brook. I had a hunch I was entering the seventh square now. But I took a look back to be sure.

Alvin Carey would inherit his uncle's fortune. Al knew me pretty well. We played chess, and somebody who played chess had engineered the set-up tonight. Al Carey knew my screwy literary tastes, and my Thursday night habits. He'd dropped in here, in Smiley's, early. And that would have been to check up that I was running true to form.

Al Carey had enough money to have hired a character actor to lead me to the slaughter. Al Carey was smart enough to have made a dupe of the actor instead of an accomplice who could blackmail him afterwards.

Al Carey had everything.

Al Carey had me in a cleft stick. He'd finagled me into a situation so utterly preposterous that the more of the truth I told, the crazier I'd look. Nuttier than peanut brittle I'd look.

"Smiley," I said. "Come here. I want to ask you something."

He moved along the bar toward me, and grinned. He always acted that way when he was puzzled.

"One more brook to cross," I told him. "But it's wider than the Mississippi. What good does it do to know something if you can't prove it?"

"Well," he said, "what good does it do you if you can prove it?"

"Smiley," I said, "I reach the king-row,

and I'm crowned. But this side of that last brook, I'm still a pawn, in pawn. What do you know about Alvin Carey?"

"Huh? He's a crackpot like you, Doc, but I don't like him. I think he's a sneak. But he's smart."

"Smiley," I said, "you surprise me. And for once I mean what I say. Some day I'll write an editorial about you, if I ever get a chance to write another editorial. What else do you know about Alvin, to his detriment? To his disadvantage, I mean."

"Well, he's yellow."

"I'm not sure of that," I said. "The draft board turned him down, if that's what you mean. Something about a trick knee. And—

"Carbozol. I got a bottle of it, sure. And a candle, because once in a while the lights here go on the blink. But no gun."

"Smiley, this is in a desperate hurry, and I can't explain," I said. "But take a plain pint bottle, no label, and fill it with Carbozol for me. And get me a candle. Cut it off short, to half an inch or so. A quarter of an inch, if you can cut it that fine. And have you got anything that looks like a gun?"

FOR a moment Smiley rubbed his chin thoughtfully. Then he grinned.

"I got an old thirty-two pistol I took away from a drunk in here one night when he got waving it around. But there ain't no bullets.

"Put 'em Up, Rex Parker! We've Got You Covered!"

SUDDENLY THE LIGHTS in the secret storeroom flooded into brilliance, and Sleuth Parker found himself looking into the business end of a lethal weapon. He longed to grab for his automatic, but he knew that would be courting death.

"YOU HAVE FIVE SECONDS to explain what you are doing here," said the man who held the gun. "Talk!"

REX PARKER knew no excuse would suffice—he was in a mighty tough spot! But it's only one of the many perilous situations Rex Parker finds himself in when he takes the trail of greed-maddened killers in *MONARCHS OF MURDER*, a baffling complete mystery novel by C. K. M. Scanlon that will hold you breathless!

Coming in the Next Issue



well, I know one stunt he pulled recently that took a lot of cool nerve."

"But don't you remember the time last year when a little chimney fire broke out at his place?" said Smiley, quickly. "A little smoke, that's all. But he ran out in his pajamas without waking anybody else up to tell 'em. He didn't stop till he reached the fire station, because he was too excited and scared to think there was a thing as a telephone."

"Smiley," I answered. "I bow before you. It's an outside chance. Pete's got his hands full right now, and is working like a Trojan to find somebody. Probably he hasn't called Alvin Carey yet. Shut up, sage, and let me think fast."

I closed my eyes and opened them again.

"I need three things, and I need them quick," I said. "I need a gun, and I need a candle stub, and I need a bottle of some kind of a cleaning fluid that smells like gasoline but is non-inflammable."

I had the firing pin filed off so I could give it to my kid."

"That's the gun I want," I told him. "Quick, Smiley, get it and the other things for me. And I'll let you finish this game of solitaire for me. And it's going to play out, too."

I sat back in the chair and waited for him to return.

And then, with the stuff he gave me safely stowed in my pockets, I went out the back door and cut through alleys as fast as I could travel without getting out of breath. Pretty soon I got there.

There weren't any lights on, which was a good sign. It meant that maybe Pete Lane hadn't got around yet to notifying the nearest of kin. If I knew Pete, he'd try to get me first, so he'd have crime and criminal all in the same report and make a good impression on Carey. For, as Barnaby's heir, Al was going to be the richest guy in town. Unless my wild idea worked.

It was a warm evening and some of the downstairs windows were open, and that was good, too. The screens were put on with turnbolts from the outside and I took one off without making any noise.

I got inside, and I was quiet about it. I didn't kid myself that Al Carey might be asleep after the night's work he'd done. But he'd be in bed, playing possum, waiting for a telephone call.

Inside the window, I took off my shoes and left them. I sneaked into the hallway and up the stairs. Outside Al's door, which was an inch ajar, I took a deep breath.

Then I stepped inside and flicked on the light switch. I had the gun ready in my hand and I pointed it at Al Carey.

"Be quiet," I warned him.

The flick of the light switch had brought him bolt upright in the bed. He was in pajamas, all right, and his hair was tousled. But his eyes showed he hadn't been asleep.

I didn't give him a chance to think it over. I walked right up to the edge of the bed, keeping that broken pistol aimed smack between his eyes, and then before he could guess what I was going to do, I raised it and brought the butt down on top of his head.

CHAPTER VII

Test by Fire

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outrgabe.

THAT was the trickiest thing I had to do—to gauge that blow just right. I'd never hit a man over the head before.

And if this stunt I had in mind was going to work, it all depended on conking him out, not for too long, and without killing him. Just long enough for me to tie him up, because I couldn't have done that and held the gun on him at the same time.

If the blow killed him it wouldn't have hurt my conscience too much. Miles Harrison had been a nice guy. So had Yehudi Smith, whatever his real name was. But if the blow killed Carey, well, there'd be one more evidence of my homicidal mania for the police.

Al went out like a light, but his heart was still beating. And I worked fast at tying him. I used everything I could find, bathrobe cords, belts, neckties—he had almost a hundred of them—and I tore one sheet into strips.

He was swathed like a mummy when I got through, tied with his head and shoulders braced up against the head of the bed so he could see the bed itself. And a handkerchief

inside his mouth held in by a scarf around the outside made a good gag. I used the strips of sheeting to tie him so he couldn't roll off the bed.

But I left his right arm free from the elbow down.

Then I slapped his face until his eyes opened. They looked groggy, at first, so I wet a washrag in the bathroom and slobbered him a few times with that. When he tried to get loose, I knew he knew what was going on.

I grinned at him. "Hello, Al," I said.

I took the pint bottle of non-inflammable cleaning fluid out of my pocket and took out the cork. Smiley had given me the right stuff.

It smelled like gasoline, all right.

I poured it over Al and over the bed, all around him.

Then, down by his knees, on a spot where the mattress was pretty wet with it, I put the half-inch stub of candle. I struck a match and held it to the wick.

"Better stop struggling, Al," I said. "You'll knock this over."

He stopped, all right. He lay as still as though he were dead, and his horrified eyes stared at that burning wick. Stared at it with the terrible fear of a pyrophobic. For that's what Smiley's story of Al Carey and the chimney fire had reminded me of. Al had an abnormal, psychopathic fear of fire.

I took out of my pocket the notebook I always carry, and a stub of pencil, and put them down within reach of his free right hand.

"Any time you want to write, Al," I told him. Turning my back on him, I walked over to the window. I waited a minute and then looked back. I had to avoid looking at his eyes.

"It'll burn down in ten minutes," I said. "You'll just about have time if you start writing. I want it in full, the main details, anyway, addressed to Pete Lane. And tell him where to find the body you hid or buried. The actor. Tell him where to look for the glass-topped table, and the bottle that had the poison in it. You'll have to write fast. If you finish in time, I'll pick up the candle."

I said it calmly, as though it didn't matter.

Then I turned away again. Only seconds later, I heard the scratch of the pencil. . . .

It was nine o'clock when Jerry and I finished remaking the paper. We'd had to rip it wide open to make room. For three murders in one evening was the biggest thing that had ever happened in Carmel City.

It rushed us more than we had been rushed in years but we didn't mind that. Nor the extra trouble. Hot news never seems like work.

The phone rang, and I answered it, and it was Jay Evers.

Jerry was staring at me in utter amazement when I put the receiver back after I finished talking.

"Who the devil were you talking to like that?" he asked me.

"Evers," I told him. "He wanted to buy the Courier, and I said no."

"But couldn't you have said no without that embroidery on it? Why insult him like you did? He'll never speak to you again."

"That was the idea," I told him. I grinned cheerfully. "Look, Jerry, if I didn't

insult him, he might ask me again tomorrow."

"But what's that got to do with what you're telling me?"

"And tomorrow, Jerry, I'm going to have the ancestor of all hang-overs, and I'd sell the paper to him, and I don't want to sell it. I like the Courier, I like Carmel City. And I enjoy being free and not in the booby-hatch and the hoosegow. So let the presses roll!"

"Doc, you better sit down before you fall down!"

But he was too late. Seconds too late.



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DEATH DRAWS A FULL HOUSE

By LEE FREDERICKS

An Intrepid Spy-Fighter Snags a Nazi Plot to Sabotage Airplane Production When He Plunges into a Wild Battle to the Finish Against Sinister Enemy Agents Bent on Grim Destruction!

CHAPTER I

Trap at the Depot

THE Cubans are proud of Central Station in Havana and with reason, for the imposing edifice dedicated to the power of the iron horse is a thing of beauty. To Unofficial Jones, undercover agent of the United States State Department, the station was a complex problem, for he was keeping a date with a stranger.

His sparkling, black darting eyes missed nothing of the people who were streaming in and out of the different platforms of the three railroads housed in this one building. He wished fervently that his date with the unknown had been at the Marjana Station in the central part of the city. The Marjana Station was much smaller and there was none of this hustle and bustle of war business.

The new bases, granted to Uncle Sam by the co-operative Cuban Government had

created a new class of Cuban travelers, the skilled laborer who moved in and out of the city to the many new airports under construction. Laborers who were dressed no differently than Jones himself, on this occasion, were streaming in and out of the building.

Jones' trained eyes ran over the crowd for the hundredth time. In his pocket he carried an introduction to the man he was to meet. This introduction he had recently taken from a spy in Mexico who was to have been on this mission. He caught a glimpse of a ticket-seller behind a wicket, one of the men he had interviewed in the office of the Cuban Secret Service only a few hours earlier. Here and there in the building were other men. Like himself they were dressed as laborers, but unlike the moving crowd, they only moved about to simulate action. An elaborate trap had been set to grab the man who came up to speak to Jones.

He did not like the way the trap was set. It appeared almost too obvious, he thought, as he looked at the clock. The man was more than half an hour late already, a sign that possibly he had spotted all of the men hanging around the station and would leave Jones waiting there until the war was over.

Jones was not a newcomer to the ranks of the United States Secret Service by any means. The Puerto Rico Indian was one of Uncle Sam's most successful agents particularly where Central and South American enemies of the United Nations were his adversaries. The Caribbean area was his particular oyster, which accounted for his presence here in Cuba.

There was nothing about "Unofficial" Jones to tell any one of his laboring neighbors in the railroad station that he was the same Jones who had won medals and broken track records while attending college in the United States. Those who looked upon him as a disreputable looking Indian, would have been surprised to learn that he was a descendant of the last of the Caciques of Puerto Rico, the fierce Carib Kings who had resisted Spain valiantly. Jones' carriage was



UNOFFICIAL JONES

A Complete "Unofficial Jones" Novelet



As Unofficial Jones leaped across the Nazi's desk he heard the pop of the girl's pistol.

kingly, and the fierceness of his traditional strain was tempered with a knowledge that made him an invaluable servant of the United States Government.

Before coming to Cuba, he had successfully followed through on cases in Panama and Mexico, and had brought real confusion to the leaders of the Nazi Gestapo and their cat'spaws in the Panama Canal Defense Zone area. Instinctively he realized that the Cuban railroad station where he now was might be another battlefield in his fight against the Axis.

A woman moved over near him and set her cheap traveling bag on the tile floor as though resting. Jones stared at her with quickened interest as he saw how carefully she looked him over. That he was supposed to meet a man named Obispo really meant nothing. Possibly the Obispo person could not show up at this time.

His heart dropped though, as the woman took her bag and started toward the Central Railway's track. Suddenly she stumbled and the bag flew from her hand. In a flash, Jones, who was nearer than anyone, jumped to her side and caught her in time to keep her from falling. For a wild moment she clung to him.

"Go to the corner of Cienfuegos and Calzada del Monte," she said in a hurried voice. "Take a coche outside, this place is watched."

HER voice, an urgent whisper, for a second left Jones feeling as though he had been hearing things. Now she was all smiles and profuse thanks. Jones noticed that the Cuban Secret Service men had watched the incident with interest but apparently thought nothing of it.

The gardenia that he wore on his coat had brought the desired results, for it was the signal that had been arranged in the letter from Mexico. So far as he was concerned he would now have to go it alone, for the unknown agent he was to meet knew the officials of the Cuban Secret Service and had sent this message to get him away from the station.

He watched the woman as she walked away and gave her a chance to get entirely clear before he himself moved.

Then, as suspicious as he knew it would look, Jones strolled over to the door of the station and before any of the astounded Cubans knew what he was up to, he leaped through the door and ran headlong toward a waiting line of taxis. A frantic signal from one of the cabs caught his attention and he leaped in the open door.

The car, already in gear, careened away from the station at a breakneck speed. Then he turned and looked back toward the station. One look made him throw

himself on the floor of the cab as quick as he could.

The men, who had been his friends a few minutes before, had taken a different attitude toward the matter after his sudden flight. He could see little puffs of smoke coming from the muzzles of their pistols as they fired after the car. The whine of the motor drowned out the reports.

With wild Latin driving that would have made his own native Puerto Ricans sit up and take notice, the cab careened around the nearest corner and sped through a narrow thoroughfare, never meant for modern traffic. Before Jones could recover his breath, the brakes went on with a force that flung Jones out of his seat.

"Get out quick," the chauffeur commanded in Spanish. "Take a slow horse-drawn coche to your destination. I will give them a chase through town."

Jones stumbled from the cab to the sidewalk. The cab had started again and lunged on at a furious rate through the narrow street. It had started not a moment too soon for, with a wail of sirens that split the air of noisy Havana like the cry of a stricken woman, two patrol cars of the Cuban Police rounded the corner and, at the risk of life and limb of the people on the street, opened fire on the taxi ahead.

The eyes of the police were riveted on the taxi or they would have seen Jones standing on the curb in plain sight. Once they had passed, he crossed the street in a leisurely fashion and told the bug-eyed cochero that he wanted to go to the corner of Cienfuegos and Calzada del Monte.

After his wild ride in the taxi the progress of the coche seemed like the eternal progress of the sleepy Latin centuries. But in due time he finally arrived at the place where he had asked to go. So far Undercover Jones had followed instructions to the letter, but now he had some slight misgivings. If the agents he was to meet knew the Cuban Secret Police so well, it was also possible that they knew that only a matter of hours before, he had been in close session with those police. He crossed his fingers and waited.

"So you are Enrico Gomez?"

The question made Jones jump. Instinctively his fingers sought the shoulder holster. Then as he looked at the petite smiling face before him, he dropped his hand foolishly to his side.

The girl laughed but Jones detected the note of hardness that her soft rounded Latin face belied.

"There are precautions, amigo," she said in a voice that carried no farther than his ears. "We had to get you away from the meeting place as it was first arranged because it seems that the patriotic detectives knew about everything except the gardenia. We

had an anxious few minutes while my sister staged the little play for you. Clever, is she not?"

Jones nodded. Enrico Gomez he was and would be while in Cuba and until this gang was rounded up and put away where they could do no harm for the duration of the war. Gomez was the man who had been executed as a spy in Mexico City only a short time before. He carried the man's identification papers.

JONES smiled at the girl.

"But where is Obispo whom I am supposed to meet?" he asked in his own liquid Spanish.

"I shall be the go-between for Senor Obispo for the time being," the girl told him. "You are now—as those 'filthy Yanquis' call it—hot, and I am to take you to a little place where you can cool off enough before we go anywhere that may be dangerous to us and to yourself."

She smiled at him charmingly.

"You are fortunate to be here, amigo," she continued. "The Mexican base no longer exists. We know nothing except that reports have stopped arriving. You may be needed to go back as soon as it is possible to make contacts for another base. Now it is better for you to come to my apartment and have a little refreshment, no?"

"Not no, but si," Jones told her with a smile. "Did anyone ever tell you that you are delightfully beautiful?"

The girl's smile froze in the making.

"Things like that can wait until times are better for our cause," she said caustically. "I was told to meet an agent, not a Don Juan. Are all Mexicans like you?"

Jones smiled at the spirit of the girl. In her outraged dignity he noticed that her easy flow of Latin-American Spanish suddenly turned to the lisping lilt of the pure Castilian.

That, in itself, told him enough. He was not dealing with a Cuban senorita at all, but rather with an agent of Franco and his Fascist Spain. He made a mental reservation to be sure to collar this one when things were ripe for the grab. She would undoubtedly be an interesting specimen when it came to finding out how she managed to get mixed in the skirts of the Axis—that is, if she hoped to keep the skirts of her own government clean.

For the time being he took the proffered arm and strolled across the street with her to the plaza. There was no hurry in her walk and Jones had the uncomfortable feeling that he was both watched and followed. He wished he could see his follower. He did not like this idea of putting up women for a shield; the Axis had, in all of his experience, hid behind everything but petti-

coats. This was a new dodge.

The building into which she took him was one of the more pretentious types of the new Cuban apartments. It was done in good taste and at the same time gave the dweller in the house all the privacy that is dear to the Latin heart.

That was the main trouble so far as Unofficial Jones was concerned. Instinct warned him he was walking into a death trap!

CHAPTER II

Den of Spies



CHILLED with foreboding, Jones followed the girl through grilled iron-work gates in front, to a patio in the center of the building. Here automatic elevator doors showed how the tenants reached the floors above. Jones noted that the full balconies running the whole length of each floor formed a resting place

where one could sit and watch the fountain play in the patio below and get a breath of fresh air on oppressive days.

He only had time to note that the building was impressively Moorish in design before the girl whisked him into an elevator and pushed the button for the mirador. That meant that the apartment was on the roof, a penthouse, and Jones would have staked any sum that the penthouse overlooked the harbor. He would have won the bet, too.

As he stepped out into the bright sunshine of the roof, the whole entrance of the harbor unfolded to his gaze. The view was breath-taking in its beauty, but it was not for any such reason that these people had rented it, he was sure. The vista of the whole harbor basin meant more than an elegant view. It meant that harbor shipping could be watched and the movements of ships reported on from some obscure radio station to a waiting submarine. A number of women employed in the right places to entertain sailors from the United Nations' ships, might easily gain information on the movements of boats from the harbor. What sailor would be apt to think that a chit of a girl could be a source of information for spies?

While the girl was friendly, there was a certain reserve in her manner to which Jones' Aruak Indian blood was sensitive. There was something of a vague warning about

her as she took the key of the apartment from her dainty sisal handbag and opened the door. Inside the apartment was garishly furnished, but Jones could see at a glance that the living room, at least, was free of others. He entered, definitely on guard for treachery.

The girl seated him in an easy chair that faced a huge mirror on the wall of the living room. As he sat down she disappeared into a tiny kitchenette to get him the promised refreshment.

As the girl came back into the room he put his hand down in his coat pocket again and smiled.

"The reception is nice, chiquita. I enjoy your company, too, but at the present time I have a little work ahead of me and I would rather do my business with the man whom I am supposed to meet."

He brought a compact, ugly-snouted Ortgie automatic from his pocket and aimed it straight at her.

"Now, be so kind as to tell me what your mysterious little game is?"

As Jones suspected, the cool question brought results. There was a hollow chuckle in the room that sounded as though it came from the loud speaker of the radio on the table in the corner of the room.

"Good!" the voice said, but without the Spanish accent that would be expected from a man named Obispo.

"You may put the popgun away," the voice continued. "You wouldn't have lived after passing the doorway if we didn't think you were all right. Walk across the room and show your letter in the mirror opposite you."

With a start Jones realized why he had had the feeling of being closely examined. That mirror on the other side of the room would be of transparent material like the old mirrors used in the speakeasies during national prohibition in the United States. On the outside it looked like a reflective mirror, but a person standing in a dark room behind the mirror could examine anybody in the room and see them as clearly as if it were an open window.

Slowly he left the chair and crossed the room. Every gesture he made with great care, even that of reaching into his pocket for the letter that he carried with him. Jones now realized that he was trapped if he made a false move, but if he got by with this, he stood a chance of working his way into the spy ring. This ring, from accounts of shipping losses in the Caribbean, was even more dangerous and deadly than the now broken ring in Mexico.

He hauled the paper from his pocket and held it up to the mirror.

"Code forty," he said.

"I don't have to be told what code, dummm-

kopf," the voice through the loud speaker grunted impatiently. "I make the codes for this district."

THOSE few boastful words from the other man sent a thrill racing down Jones' spine. He did not doubt the truth of the declaration for a moment. That one word of German had given his nationality away completely. The remarks he made about codes could mean only one thing, as far as his information from Washington was concerned. The man on the other side of that translucent mirror was Braeder, the code expert from Bremen.

Rumors had suggested that he was in these waters, but it had been doubted in Washington. A chief of that importance usually took good care of his own hide and stayed within Germany or the occupied countries where he could loose terrorism without too much danger to himself. His being here meant that Germany was in serious trouble and needed a key man on the job to run things.

Finally a grunt that echoed hollowly through the loud speaker told him that Braeder had decoded the message. Jones straightened and looked at the mirror.

"You have a message for me?" he asked in Spanish.

The voice spoke through the loud speaker again as Jones stood waiting for some sort of orders.

"You can now go to see the Obispo at general headquarters," the voice told him. "You will be outfitted with an identity card and a Cuban registration card for military service in case you are picked up by the police. There will be work for you soon, tonight in fact. We are going to make life sweet for those pigs of Yankee fliers who are making things slightly difficult for the Fuehrer's submarines."

Jones saluted and then raised his right hand as the Mexican Gold Shirts were taught to do.

"The New Order," he said solemnly.

"Heil, Hitler!" the voice answered. "You are dismissed."

Jones turned uncertainly and saw that the girl, who had accosted him on the street, already had her hat on. She was no longer severe in her attitude; in fact, she was smiling at him. She beckoned him toward the door where they had entered.

Jones would have given his right eye to explore this apartment further, but there was nothing he could do without arousing suspicion, except to follow her. He smiled at the girl and opened the door.

"After you, Bonita," he said with a gallant bow. "A man's place in the world is to follow a beautiful woman."

In the blinding sun in front of the build-

ing another taxi of the same type that had given him such a wild ride from the station, stood waiting. The girl took his arm and led him firmly toward it. Once inside she leaned toward the driver.

"Numero seis," she said.

Jones looked at her strangely. She had given no address, just plain number six. At least it seemed to indicate the Axis had succeeded in establishing a multitude of vulture nests in this city. He wondered how many more than six there were, but there was no sign of that thought in his impassive face as he leaned back against the cushions and closed his eyes as though resting.

Once the cab got under way the girl nestled up against him, but Jones was not to be taken in by this old subterfuge. He behaved as any man would under the circumstances, but at the same time kept his wits and his eyes active enough to count the street corners they passed, and to note every turn the cab made.

Seeing the same drug store twice in the space of a few minutes made him grin to himself. The cabby was pulling an old dodge of running around several blocks and making an approach from different directions. While they were supposed to be going half way across the city in the matter of distance, Jones noticed that they were still within less than two blocks of where they had started.

• Ten minutes later the cab pulled up at the curb. Jones would have laughed outright if his laughter would not have given him away. He had taken in the details of the apartment building from the ground floor to the roof. The apartment block was easily the highest building in the neighborhood, and now the glimpse of its ornate trimmings told him that they were on the street directly in back of it.

Actually he had been taken for a ride of about twenty-five minutes in the cab. It might have fooled someone else, but Jones had been in Havana too many times before to fall for a wheeze of this kind. Nevertheless he was careful not to betray his knowledge or the slightest sign of curiosity, for he knew that his life might be snuffed out in an instant, if he did.

BY USING his keen Indian eyes, Unofficial Jones had noted the number of building where he was being taken and its general appearance, among other things. He allowed the girl to lead him across the narrow sidewalk and into a shop that bore the legend "Juan Torres, Printing."

She paid no attention to the presses, but walked straight through the building to an areaway, where she descended a flight of stairs to a freight elevator. Jones looked about in amazement. He was being led back

into the same building that they had left a short time before, only through another entrance.

She entered the elevator ahead of him and Jones took the opportunity the moment her back was turned to take the pistol from his shoulder holster and drop it in the pocket of his coat. His hand closed over the butt of the pistol as the girl pulled the chain that started the elevator.

This time the elevator did not go to the roof. Jones counted the floors as they passed the heavy steel door at each landing. The elevator was a large one intended for moving furniture up and down in the apartment building and the doors were the heavy overhead type that rolled up on steel cylinders. He counted four floors and then the lift stopped. Counting the basement, it meant they were on the fourth floor.

Before Jones could move to open the door the girl tapped three times, paused and then tapped twice more. The door suddenly rolled up toward the ceiling on silent, well-oiled hinges and disclosed not an apartment hall as Jones had expected, but a large room.

It seemed that the whole floor was intended for a warehouse. From the elevator to the outside walls of the building Jones could see the large room was crowded with bags of what might be sugar. Still farther over to one side it was stacked high with cases that looked suspiciously like they might contain rifle and machine guns.

CHAPTER III

Fight for Life



STHE girl stepped off the elevator, Jones followed, but kept his hand jammed down in his pocket so that he had the gun reassuringly trained on anything that might pop up. With the exception of the Cuban in work clothes, the room was empty.

Quickly Jones followed the tap-tap of the girl's high heels as they clattered along the floor to the front of the building. He examined the bags minutely while he was passing between them. One of the bags, with a hole in it, confirmed his original thought. They did contain sugar. The Nazi's remark about making things sweet for the Yankee fliers evidently had something to do with these bags of sugar, just what Jones did not yet know.

As they passed the last bag of sugar and

entered another corridor Jones gave a start. Several laborers had one of the bags of sugar open and were portioning it out in small cannisters with pouring spouts on them. Each small tin was of a size to hold about two pounds of the cane crystals. The spouts had tight metal covers to fit over the top and resembled the automatic pouring sugar bowls used in New York cafeterias.

Hooked up with the words of the Nazi master spy in the apartment above, these tins had a significance that, to Jones, was startling. He was sure now that they were meant for Fifth Column workers who would have access to the American patrol planes leaving the fields of Cuba to fly over the submarine infested Caribbean Sea to the south.

In his mind's eye he could see one plane after another cough and give up the ghost far out over the sea. Sabotage on a scale so grand that it was staggering in its portent.

It was simple to the extreme and yet diabolical enough to have been spawned inside the realm of demons. A little sugar in the gasoline tank of each plane, provided it could be placed there, would foul the carburetor of the ship so that it could not feed the high test gasoline to the motor. A ship without a motor out in the Caribbean would not be able to live long if the weather got a little rough. Also a plane would be easy prey to a submarine on the surface with a well placed shell.

For a moment he thought of turning back and at once making his way out of the building and getting the first policeman he laid eyes on. He half turned, and then just as rapidly changed his mind.

The steel door by which he had entered was shut tight and where there had been no one a few minutes before there were now several determined looking guards barring any escape.

Moving across the room, the girl swung open a door, and motioned for Jones to enter an elaborately furnished office.

The man sitting in there, behind the desk, was a stranger to Jones. Tall and blond, he could have been a perfect example of what Hitler called an Aryan, if it had not been for the green in his eyes. They were deep as aquamarines, in their intensity of light. The man's first words of Castilian gave him away completely. His heavy accent told Jones plainly that the man was a Basque. He was of the people from the north of Spain who are believed to be of the Celtic race.

"You are supposed to be Gomez," the man said in an impersonal voice. "You are lying. Gomez is a man that I myself picked for his work in Mexico. It will be better for you if you tell us just who you are and what

you want from us. Also you must explain why you come here as an impersonator."

"I am Gomez," Jones answered, unflinchingly, in a voice just as quiet. "My brother was killed in Mexico and I brought this message to you and I am ready to go back to help form a new base."

The green eyes seemed to bore into him.

"So you are his brother, eh," sneered the man at the desk. "Your little admission that you are not Gomez has put you in trouble, my friend. To be frank, I do not know Gomez, never met him in my life. And I do not believe you are his brother, either. You should never have made such a damaging admission to me."

His hand reached out for the button on the desk.

"In the civil war in Spain we were well trained to get the truth from people in various ways, which you shall find out in a few minutes. Perhaps when we have finished with you, your seared flesh shall make you more than willing to tell us just who and what you are."

His hand never reached the button for which it had sought. That the girl who led him into the office had a gun trained on the small of his back made no difference to Jones.

WITH one swift leap he crossed the desk and with arms in grappling readiness, had the man on the other side by the throat. The force of the jump sent both men toppling to the floor. Jones heard the pop of the girl's pistol, which sounded like a cork being pulled from a bottle. Then they both toppled behind the desk and out of range.

The Basque was strong, his arms and legs were short and his muscles corded like the running muscles of a bull. He got a hold on Jones and his legs closed in a scissor hold around the torso of the government agent. Jones felt his ribs cracking under the strain being put on them. Then in a second the man's fingers clutched for Jones' throat, took a hold and as the agent brought his two arms up between the arms to break their hold, he clutched again.

Jones had no trouble in avoiding the clawing fingers the second time. He brought his own hands up so that he could come down for an effective rabbit punch. Though the man was as strong as a bull, he lacked the training which Jones had received in the F.B.I. school in the United States. The ju-jutsu that he had learned from one of the Oriental members of the Secret Service now stood him in good stead.

Quickly, fighting as a cat fights, he swerved his body so that he was under the man. His hand raised up and descended in a short arc that caught the other in the spine where it leads into the neck. The man let out a gasp

and wilted. A stifled scream from the girl told Jones only too plainly that she had seen the blow and understood.

There was another pop from the small calibered pistol and the man on top of Jones collapsed like a pricked balloon.

The shot intended for Jones had plowed its way into the other's back and finished the job before Jones' deft hands had the chance.

Unofficial Jones did not try to jump to his feet. Instead he made a quick roll out from under the body of the spy and dove under the knee hole of the desk. After firing, the girl dashed closer, holding her weapon in readiness. In the meantime he was praying she would not think to fire right through the desk top, but would come to the other side in order to get a look at him before she shot.

The ruse worked. The girl ran around the desk with her pistol poised for action. But she never had a chance to use it, for Jones came out from under his cover in a flying tackle that had made his reputation as a football player while in college in the United States.

He caught the girl wholly unprepared for such an action. The gun flew from her hand as she clutched the edge of the desk wildly to keep from falling. Jones loosed his hold and came to his feet, with his hand clamped over her mouth to still the screech that started from her lips. With his other hand he scooped up the pistol, which he dropped in his pocket alongside the heavier caliber one that he carried.

His taking the gun seemed to work wonders with the girl's spirit. She grew quiet at once and seemed ready to offer no further resistance. Jones experimentally took his palm from her mouth, but made ready to clap it on again at any sign of an outcry. The girl made none.

"The stairs," Jones said fiercely. "Where are they?"

She turned toward him as a sleep-walker might have done.

"Stairs will never carry you out of this building," she told him. But as she spoke she glanced at a panel in the wall and he realized it was a cleverly concealed door.

He grabbed her arms and pulled her from the panel. At the same time his fingers reached the protrusion in the wall that served for a knob. The door opened with no difficulty, and the stairs he was looking for led up and down from the landing outside. He stepped through, slamming the door shut behind him.

Up three flights Jones raced until confronted by a steel door which he surmised led to that back room in the mirador where the German master spy was hiding. Jones had decided on a crowning stroke which would mean taking a wild chance that might

be worth the trouble—provided it worked. He lifted his fists and pounded on the door and was rewarded instantly by the door being flung open by an irate man whom he knew immediately as Braeder, the code expert from Bremen. "Vass iss?" he queried in German and then he recognized Jones as the man he had spoken to a short time before and changed to rapid and almost faultless Spanish.

"What are you doing here?" he asked. "Bells ringing all over the place and then you pounding on the door. What do you want?"

Jones took his hand off the gun in his pocket, holding it in readiness in case the man knew what was up.

"Raid!" he said breathlessly. "The Cuban police are below."

THE man blinked at him owlishly as he pulled the door open wide.

"So, come in, dummkopf. You help me to pack and get out of here before they can break the door down."

Quickly Jones slipped into the room. He decided to keep the guise of helper as long as possible, for the room where he found himself was lined with filing cabinets to the ceiling. It would take a good half day of searching for him to wade through the stuff to get all the evidence he wanted and at the same time ferret out other organizations that might be tied in with this one in the Caribbean area.

Then his eyes lighted on a map of the whole Caribbean area with heavy red lines around islands off the Central American Coast. He thrilled as he saw this was more than a common spy nest established for the present moment. To smash it would be to smash a central nerve center that served as the headquarters for reports direct to the Nazi nation.

One look around the room was enough to convince him he had found a plague spot to Democracy, from which was spawned most of the Fifth-column activity in lands all the way from Florida to the north coast of South America. To break it up would be to save innumerable tons of shipping as well as many seamen's lives. Until now this section had been a blood-drenched danger zone to the United Nations and their many friends.

Braeder paid no attention to the preoccupation of his supposed ally as his eyes searched the room in a comprehensive survey. Instead the Nazi pulled open a drawer in a set of files, marked "Confidential," and started to dump manila folders on the desk, spilling some in his haste.

Without looking in Jones' direction he pointed to a Gladstone bag over in the corner near a comfortable looking studio couch.

"Quick, get that bag and pile these papers in it," he panted shortly as he frantically rummaged in the file. "Don't bother to get them in alphabetically. Time is too short. Hurry!"

As he stopped speaking the buzzer sounded on the telephone at the desk. Without apparently moving, Jones snared his foot around the line where it trailed down to the floor, then drew the cord tight and gave a jerk from the direction of the buzzer box. The cord came loose just as the harassed looking Braeder took up the receiver and as he barked into the phone his eyes traveled in a bewildered fashion toward the line on the floor.

As yet Jones had not had time to unloose the cord from his foot. When the German master spy's eyes took in the situation he slammed the receiver down with a string of guttural curses and his eyes glaring like those of a beast. Before he had a chance to move, however, the pistol had jumped from Jones' pocket.

"I am in a ticklish spot, Mr. Master Mind," Jones smiled, speaking in English. "Make a false move and you will never live to triumph over me."

Braeder had been master only one short moment before. Now he showed how craven is a Nazi when the cards are stacked against him. As he started to reach for the upper drawer of the desk, he saw that Jones' eyes had narrowed and thought better of it. With a whimper of fear he thrust his hands ceilingward. Then realizing that there had been no order for him to reach, he let them drop back to his sides, smiling foolishly.

A look of cunning replaced the stark terror that had glazed his green eyes a moment before.

"You like glory from your own country, hein?" he asked. "I make you the proposition where you take these files and you allow me to slip out of this back door. You get the files and the glory and I get the freedom."

"We are both going out of here," said Jones. "We either leave here together or you get a bullet in the intestines. It isn't a pleasant death and you will writhe in the same agony that you and your gang inflict upon others, before you cash your check. Shall we march?"

Braeder's eyes told Jones that he believed him capable of anything at all. His own mind trained to cruel treatment of helpless prisoners had conditioned him to thinking in cruelties.

Now that he felt himself on the receiving end of such treatment his actions became frenzied.

Without thought of the consequences he sprang at Jones like a desperate trapped animal!

CHAPTER IV

Nazi Code of Honor



JONES had been expecting just such a move. As Braeder leaped forward, the muzzle of the American agent's weapon poked him hard, and Jones stepped to one side, allowing the weight of the Nazi's body to drive it deep home. Then Jones pulled his arm back and still holding the gun barrel rigid, delivered a short jab, using the barrel of the gun instead of his fist as a means of delivering a terrific punch.

The force of the blow sat Braeder on the floor, a look of bewildered pain on his features. Jones did not allow the man time to think but came forward again, using the barrel of the gun to swipe a neat crease down the face of the German agent.

The second blow was enough for the Nazi. Braeder threw his hands up in front of his face with a sobbing cry.

"Mein Gott, stop. You disfigure me for life." His voice trembled with panic as Jones leaned over him again.

"You are going out of here with your pretty features intact only under one condition," Jones said to Braeder. "You have microfilm of all this stuff you are leaving behind. That film is not parked in this room. You've hidden the film somewhere. Are you going to lead me to it?"

"That fool haff told you everything," Braeder groaned. "The Fuehrer does not like failures. I go with you by my private exit to Central Station. The films are there in a lock box."

"Then let us go by your private exit," Jones told Braeder slowly. "You must lead the way."

As he spoke he scooped the Gladstone type briefcase off the desk with one hand, but his gun never wavered from the large middle of the German.

Braeder did not answer in words. Instead he grandly stalked across the room and slid back a panel of the studio wall. The opening was a small one and inside Jones could see a tiny elevator that would just about hold two men. It could be a dangerous trap, but there was nothing for Jones to do but follow, unless he wanted to walk into the nest of spies in the building proper. He realized this was his last chance. Braeder had no opportunity to see what was in Jones'

mind. He had entered the lift and the door was closing all in a split second.

The elevator proved to be a frail contraption, not built to carry much weight. The two men in it made it creak ominously as Braeder pushed the button that started it downward. Jones noticed that this time there were no floor stops as in the other elevators he had seen in the building. The shaft apparently led to one exit only, the exit of which only Braeder knew.

He held the gun on Braeder ready to blaze away at the first sign of treachery. He could not use his other hand to grasp the service pistol in his pocket, because of the case of papers he carried, but he did stand in readiness to drop the bag and grab the gun.

Finally the elevator came to a halt in front of a small steel door. Braeder made no attempt at a false move to excite the suspicions of Jones. Cautiously he reached out his hand so that Jones could watch every move and lifted the steel latch on the door. Jones observed his actions like a hawk, but still he was not quick enough to stop the ponderous bulk of Braeder as he slipped through the door and started to push it shut, leaving Jones inside.

There was no chance for Jones to fire his gun. The door already was too far shut for Braeder to present a target. The only thing Jones could do was jam the cloth of his coat into the door so that, when it clanged shut, it prevented the outside lock from clicking in place.

From outside he heard the exultant voice of Braeder, who thought the door completely closed.

"Now, Mr. Smarty," he said in a thick guttural accent, "you haff five minutes to think of what iss going to happen to you and your friends when this building go boom. You do not know that I set the switch to blow up the place when I open the cabinets in the office upstairs and leave them open."

Jones felt the door give slightly as the heavy German moved away. He counted a slow three to give the man a three second start and then heaved on the door. Fortune as well as good judgment was with him. His coat had indeed prevented the door from locking fast. Now the latch gave and the door swung open. At the same instant Jones sprang out of the elevator, his gun ready for action.

THE sound of the door clanging back brought Braeder, now ten feet away, wheeling about. The Nazi stared with unbelieving eyes at the apparition that had come through what he thought was a tightly closed door. Then, as the fact registered in his brain, he ducked quickly behind a pile of boxes and rubble, into what Jones later

found out was a sort of delivery basement of the building.

Quickly Jones catfooted in the direction of the boxes. About twenty feet away he saw a shaft of sunlight that told him of an entrance to the street, near enough so he could sprint for safety, if what the German had said about the impending explosion were true. He knew enough of the cruelty of Braeder to feel reasonably certain he had told the truth. He only desired to grab him before the explosion so that he could bring him before the Cuban Military Court.

The sharp report of a shot from what he thought was an unarmed man took Jones by surprise. It was not until after his own gun, the service pistol this time, roared, that he felt the tingling in his arm and realized that he had been winged by the one shot. There was a clatter behind the boxes and then stillness.

Cautiously Jones advanced on the pile of rubbish and boxes that cluttered the floor of the basement. There was no sound from behind the boxes until he was almost on top of them. Then a roar that rocked him on his feet as Braeder, with a crazed look in his eyes rushed out to meet him, firing his gun as he came.

Realizing that the man was hysterical from fear of consequences, Jones leveled his gun and took deliberate aim for the Nazi's belt. As the report of his gun sounded, the bulky German reached for his middle. For a moment Braeder tottered. His fingers working convulsively, he toppled backward into the pile of boxes and went down with a clatter. Jones did not wait there to watch the death writhings of the spy. He picked up the bag and hotfooted it for the shaft of light.

As he rushed up the few steps to the street level Jones flew right into the arms of two Havana Metropolitan Police, who had come pounding up to investigate the shots. With a gasp of relief Jones shouted at them.

"Explosion coming! Get people away from this building." Then as he saw the men were looking at him as though he were demented or drunk, he continued, "Clear the street rapidly and take me to the Secret Service Headquarters."

The last words worked wonders with the police. One of them blew his whistle shrilly for help and headed for the front of the building. The other took a firm grasp on the back of Jones' neck.

"As you say, amigo," the policeman told him, "and if this explosion doesn't come—"

He left the sentence unfinished, but the look he gave Jones suggested enough to make the American agent glad he was not playing practical jokes.

The policeman rushed Jones across the plaza to the spot where he had met the girl only a few hours before. The girl, who had

probably paid for the meeting with her life, must be dead somewhere on the stairway in the building across the way. The policemen and Jones had hardly made the other side of the plaza when the earth rocked under them. Then, as if they were blades of grass in the way of a gust of wind, both were thrown to the ground by a thunderous blast that enveloped them in a tearing roar.

The policeman no longer had a grasp on Jones as they both sat up. He did not even reach out for his prisoner but sat there on the sidewalk dazedly looking across the plaza where a heap of mortar and bad quality concrete was settling in a pile of its own dust. Somewhere on the bottom of that pile would be the crushed pulp of what had once been a dangerous enemy of the United Nations. Jones felt around mechanically for the Gladstone bag. The briefcase was still with him there on the sidewalk.

An hour later Jones was sitting in the headquarters of the Cuban Secret Service. On the desk lay five compact rolls of microfilm that had been taken from the lock box in Central Station by one of the Cuban Secret Police!

BESIDE these films was a small book with notations, names and addresses of

both spies and potential spies of the Axis Powers, as well as the contents of the briefcase.

The haul had been considerable because it gave locations for the rendezvous of oil-bearing sailboats supplying submarines in the Caribbean Sea off the Cuban coast. A complete Axis nerve center had been shattered and an Axis agent of major importance had been put out of business in the New World.

The Cuban Secret Service official grinned as he looked over the haul, and then he held out his hand to Unofficial Jones sitting near the desk.

"You had us guessing when you ran out of the railroad station," he admitted, "but then, in work such as ours, it is like the American game called poker. One must wait to see what cards are drawn before he acts."

Unofficial Jones grinned wryly as he thought of the Axis spies who had been caught in that building, guarding all entrances to see that he did not escape, while he was actually upstairs, bearding their chief in his own office.

"You are right," he said. "It is like poker. Only this time death sat in on the game and drew a full house."



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She's as Lively as a Youngster—Now her Backache is better

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(Adv.)



As Steve Bishop attacked, the thug behind him raised his blackjack

MURDER FIST

By NORMAN A. DANIELS

*Detective Steve Bishop Thought He'd Lost His Punch—
Then He Swung into the Hardest-Hitting Fight of His Life!*

DETECTIVE Bishop wasn't a big man, but he had square shoulders and a pair of scientific fists. A first grade detective, he hadn't been sent to the downtown waterfront area because of his looks. He had a knack of cleaning out rats' nests, but he had never been known to reach for the gun the regulations insisted he carry. His fists did it.

Some of the hoodlums in his district called him "One Punch", others "Brass Knuckles". Others used unprintable terms. He didn't mind. The more they hated him, the easier it was to punch their heads off without any

qualms of conscience.

At the moment Bishop was giving a pretty good demonstration of his prowess. Two men, both bigger than himself, swung around a corner, saw Bishop and slowed up. They whispered for a moment, scowled balefully and kept on advancing.

Tom Mason, reporter on the Sphere, knew what was going to happen.

"Hey, Steve, these babies are really gunning for you. One of 'em is Mitch Ruffino and he's plain poison."

Steve Bishop grinned.

"I've got the antidote for poisonous guys, Tom. Watch this."

Steve moved out to face the two men. He stepped close to Ruffino, who towered a full seven inches above him.

"Mitch," Steve said mildly, "I thought I gave orders that you were to stay away from my district. You wouldn't want me to slap you down, would you? Not a big shot like you?"

"Listen," Mitch Ruffino began to feel the first uncomfortable pangs of doubt, "I got a right to go where I want. I haven't done a thing and you can't make me stay away from any place I want to go."

Tom Mason watched from the doorway. He saw Mitch's friend gradually edge to one side so he could tackle Bishop from the rear, saw the thug slyly reach in his hip pocket and swing up with a blackjack.

Mason opened his mouth to yell a warning, but it wasn't necessary. Bishop seemed to have eyes in the back of his head—or a complete understanding of how mugs like these operated.

He swung around, raised one hand and parried the descending blow. His other hand curled into a fist and drove straight into the thug's middle. It drew a 'whoosh' of pain that a driving right to the jaw silenced almost before it began.

The thug reeled backwards, stepped off the curb and lost his balance. He fell heavily. Ruffino watched as though entranced. Only the falling of his pal broke his silence. With an elephantine roar of rage he crouched a little, extended both hands and moved on Bishop. Obviously his intentions were to grasp the smaller man and squeeze the life out of him.

Bishop knew this trick and dodged the deadly embrace. He came in from the flank and whipped a glancing blow to the nose. The sudden attack disconcerted Ruffino to such an extent that he just stood, his guard down. Bishop measured the next punch, starting it down near the sidewalk. It lifted Ruffino off his feet and

crashed him into the gutter beside his friend.

BISHOP dry-washed his hands and strolled back to Tom Mason.

"They had it coming," he grunted with great satisfaction. "Both of 'em are punks. They'd do anything from rolling a drunk to snatching a kid from his carriage. Only they won't try it on my beat."

Mason went over to the fallen men, knelt and examined Ruffino. He came back to Bishop.

"Steve," he said seriously, "everyone admits you're about the handiest man with your fists on the force. You've never been known to draw a gun or to take unfair advantage. These two monkeys had what they got coming to them, but I saw that roundhouse punch you used. Some day, Steve, you'll kill a man."

"What's the difference if I kill him with my fists or a bullet?" Bishop asked with a grin. "Look, Tom, if they didn't assign me to tough beats, I'd be lost. You've got to admit this district is clean. No gambling places, no stickups, no dives. Why? Because every last monkey down here is afraid of me. If they weren't I wouldn't last two hours. I've got to stay tough."

"Nobody says you aren't doing a good job," Mason protested. "I only meant you might kill a man. Steve, talking to you does no good. For your own sake I'm going to write a story about this scrap. I'll prophesy you'll break someone's neck if you aren't tamed down."

"You do," Bishop warned ominously, "and you can go hang before I'll give you any more stories. Maybe you'll rate a punch on the nose, too."

"Maybe," Mason sighed. "But it would be for your own good, Steve. I'd take that punch gladly if I thought it would make you change. There's such a thing as being too tough."

Mason walked away fast. Steve

Bishop rubbed his chin and smiled. Even if Mason did write a story, his superiors wouldn't cut him down. They knew the good he was doing. Nothing would happen.

He was wrong, things *did* happen when Tom Mason's article appeared. It blasted Detective Steve Bishop, related a half column of names found on hospital records as the result of his fists.

His friends started to kid him about it, but stopped after awhile. He didn't seem to like it. Captain Burke gave him a stern lecture advising him to be more careful.

It all added up to a seething resentment in Bishop's heart. The night the story came out he made half a dozen arrests. Every one of them required a physician by the time he was brought in.

Tom Mason accounted for that, too, in the next day's paper. He stayed away from Bishop entirely, sensing the detective might lose his head if they met.

Bishop read Mason's second story, crumpled the newspaper and flung it into the waste receptacle on the corner. He began stalking his district, almost praying trouble would start.

A CAR pulled to the curb, swanky job with remarkably good tires, white walls impossible to buy today.

The door opened and Mitch Ruffino stepped out. As he saw Bishop he raised both hands in a gesture of peace.

"Everything is under control, Copper," he half whined. "I'll stay out of your district after tonight. That's a promise. What happened the other night was the fault of my pal. I was ready to dust when you told me to, but he lost his head and I guess I did, too."

"Yeah," Bishop grunted, "you almost lost it for good, by getting it knocked off. Why are you around tonight?"

"A party at the Kitten Club," Ruffi-

no said. "It's for Joe Delaney. The poor guy is sick and we're sending him west for his health. Let me go to the party and I won't trouble you again."

"Okay," Bishop agreed. "Delaney is a sick man and needs money. Only remember this if anything develops at that shindig, so help me, I'll smear you first. Keep it running smoothly and quietly, you hear?"

"Yes, sir," Ruffino gulped. "There won't be no noise, Copper, honest."

Bishop began to believe that two hours later. He'd watched more than fifty men enter the club, but everything was quiet. Ruffino was keeping them down for his own welfare. Bishop grinned. This was the side of the story Tom Mason couldn't grasp. How things were accomplished by bluff. Keep these monkeys afraid and they were as peaceful as a meeting of bishops.

At twelve-twenty, Bishop made a routine report to his precinct by phone, strolled in the direction of the club and blinked. A bottle came crashing through one of the windows. Then another and another. A gigantic din began to arise. Women screamed and men cursed. A few came out of the front door as if they'd been ejected by powerful springs. Then the door closed.

Bishop started running. He colared one of the men who had come out.

"H-holy mackerel," the man gasped, "what a scrap. Everybody is in it but the kitchen help."

Bishop knew better than try to gain admittance by the front door. It was stoutly constructed and would be securely locked. He raced down the alley, reached the kitchen door and barged through a group of workers that were huddled in a corner as if they expected the blasting battle to pour into the kitchen at any moment.

"One of you phone for the wagon," Bishop snapped. "On second thought," he added, "have 'em send for an am-

balance too."

Bishop pushed open swing doors, started down a hallway and encountered two men locked in a tussle. He grasped each by the neck, banged their heads against the wall and dropped them. He reached the main dining room and gasped. He'd seen many a fight in a tough district, but this one outclassed them all. Even the orchestra was in it, swinging their instruments as weapons.

THROUGH the crowd, Bishop saw Mitch Ruffino standing on the platform, yelling himself hoarse and waving his hands. Once he had to duck a flying glass. He seemed earnest about trying to stop the fight.

Bishop reached into his pocket and took out a police whistle. A shrill blast stopped the commotion for about one-tenth of a second but then it began again. He pulled his hat down around his ears and waded in.

He fought his way to the center of the floor and tried to shout down the racket but it was no use. Somebody took a punch at him. He swung around and one well-aimed blow disposed of the mug who'd been foolish enough to attack.

He felt a surge of rage as he saw Tom Mason elbowing his way through the crowd towards him. He wondered what Mason would write about this affair and decided he should have a real story.

He collared the man next to him and drove him to the floor with a haymaker. He felt a stinging blow to the face, whirled and hit out again. Tom Mason was swinging at him. Bishop pushed him back with the flat of his hand, only to have the reporter surge forward again, lancing out blow after blow. His blows kept Bishop so busy there was no time to break up the main fight.

"Wait until you read my paper tomorrow," Mason yelled. "If you thought I didn't pull punches before, read what I'm going to write now. It

will crucify you like the rotten double-crosser . . ."

Bishop's temper snapped. He hit Mason under the chin, hard. He saw him fall before a horde of men jumped at him obstructing his view. Bishop battled his way to the wall, glanced toward the platform and saw that Ruffino was no longer there.

There was a crashing sound at the front of the entrance. Within a few moments the door gave way and a horde of patrolmen swept in, clubs swinging. That ended the battle.

Captain Burke, in charge of the force, made his way through the debris-littered room. He stopped beside the crumpled form of Tom Mason and knelt to make a quick examination. As he rose his face was grim. He walked up to Bishop who was standing by the wall massaging sore knuckles.

"How did Mason get into this, Bishop?" he asked.

"You got me there, Captain," Bishop said. "I heard the fight start and sent for help. Then I came in through the kitchen. Mason saw me. He started fighting. I don't know why."

"You poked him?" Burke demanded.

"I had to," Bishop said. "The darned fool kept hitting so that I couldn't get away to stop the rest of the mayhem. I had to let him have it on the jaw. He'll be okay, don't worry."

"I'm not worrying," Captain Burke said. "But you should. Mason is dead—his neck is broken."

BISHOP gave the captain a startled glance and went over and knelt beside the body on the floor. One look and he knew the Captain hadn't exaggerated. Mason was dead. He felt tiny beads of sweat break out on his forehead and he realized his fists were clenched tight. Slowly he opened his hands and as he stood up his fingers were rigid and extended.

He walked back to Captain Burke. Mitch Ruffino was with him.

"It wasn't Bishop's fault," Ruffino said. "I saw the whole thing. Bishop even made me promise to keep the party quiet before I came in, but the scrap started too fast for me to stop. This guy he slugged is a stranger to me but I saw him poking Bishop. If the copper hadn't popped him one, he probably would have been killed himself. Some of the boys were looking for a chance to let him have it. Bishop ain't too well liked around here, you know."

Captain Burke faced Bishop.

"If I remember the records, you knocked Ruffino cold just the other day. Yet now he's alibiing you. His story will stick, too. It lets you out of a pretty serious charge, Steve."

"I only hit Mason lightly," Bishop protested. "He was my pal. Sure, he razed the devil out of me lately, but that was okay. I still liked him."

"There are some people who seem to think differently," Burke snapped. "I'm one of them. You're off duty, Steve. Tomorrow report to me. You're going to be put where nothing like this will happen again. I'll see that you're sent some place where there aren't any sidewalks and where people are scarcer than filled gasoline tanks. That's all. Beat it before the reporters start taking pictures."

Ruffino stepped up to Bishop.

"Honest, Copper, I'm sorry this happened. All the guys you've ever slugged deserved it, including me, and I'll stand up before any board or court and swear Mason started the scrap."

"Thanks," Bishop muttered.

He walked out slowly, headed aimlessly up the street and then winced. Tom Mason had a sister. Somebody had to break the news to her and no one deserved the unpleasant job more than the man who had killed him.

He hailed a taxi and was driven to a neat little bungalow in a suburban area. After paying off the driver he walked up the path and knocked on the front door.

The house was dark, but he felt he

had to awaken the girl. At least he'd face her.

No one answered. He knocked again and punched the bell. It was ringing inside, but no one came to answer it. He took hold of the door knob and pushed the door open. As he stepped into the hallway two men came rushing out of the darkness. He stepped into the middle of the hall to block their escape. One man had a weapon of some kind and started swinging it. Bishop's right fist started forward. At the same instant the picture of Tom Mason's white face and twisted neck rose before him. His punch landed with the tame wallop of a kitten's paw.

His assailant's weapon smashed against the side of his head, knocking him against the wall. He fell to his knees, but was up again in a second flat, charging the two men who crowded the doorway. Halfway he stopped. His hand darted toward the gun holstered on his hip.

His draw was slow, incredibly slow because he never had believed in the necessity of practising it. By the time he got it out, both men had disappeared into the night.

After what had just happened he knew that he'd never hit another man. The knowledge that there was death in his punches had left fear in his heart.

HE began to wonder why Tom Mason's house had been invaded. He turned on lights. The house was a wreck and anything of value had been taken. Those two mugs had been plain burglars. He was thankful for one thing—Tom Mason's sister hadn't been home to get hurt.

He went to the phone to report the robbery, but before he could lift the receiver hard heels clicked on the porch. He turned to stare at Tom Mason's sister. She looked around and gave a gasp when she saw the confusion.

"Burglars paid you a visit, Miss

Mason." Bishop said. "They got away from me. I really came to tell you . . ."

"I know what you have to tell me," the girl said slowly. "Tom is dead. You killed him. You killed him because he was trying to make you see that force isn't the only way to accomplish things. You are a little Hitler. You are strong and clever with your fists and you like to hit people. Particularly who haven't the skill to fight back. Now get out of here. Please get out quickly."

Bishop went, feeling lower than the cracks in the sidewalk.

The next day was undiluted agony. His reputation made every newspaper play the story up big. He faced his superiors at Police Headquarters and was exonerated of all blame, but they demoted him to a patrolman and he was assigned to an outlying beat.

He was satisfied with the new arrangement. During long night hours he had begun to realize that the chances were he'd never be able to hit a man again. Until he got into another scrape he wouldn't know whether or not Mason's death had turned him into a coward.

Long hours on patrol gave him time to think back—on Ruffino's strange intercession; the fact that Tom Mason's house had been robbed at the very time his sister was called to Headquarters; Tom Mason's strange actions. An autopsy had stated that Mason was not intoxicated at the time of his death. What reason could have compelled him to launch an assault upon a man he had always called a friend?

Bishop's night off was the worst thing he had to face. He wanted to go downtown, invade the old haunts and check up on Mason and Ruffino, but he was afraid. Perhaps those two burglars at Tom Mason's house had recognized his new fear of fighting and had broadcast the news over the underworld.

The fact that he was beginning to think of himself as a coward finally

made Bishop decide to begin his own investigation. Until that doubt was cleared out of his mind, he couldn't go on.

The first place he went was the club where the fight had taken place. Ever since that night it had been closed down on police orders. It was empty as he entered the building through the kitchen door. He walked across the wide dance floor, shivering as he passed near the spot where Tom Mason had fallen.

DEBRIS still covered the floor and he poked around it aimlessly. He had nothing to go on. All he knew was that Mason must have had a mighty good reason to attack him. He had known that Bishop could wallop him at will, end any fight he started in two seconds.

There was a telephone booth near the checkroom. Bishop stepped into it, dialed a number and asked for Mitch Ruffino.

"The Kitten Club is going to be burned down tonight," he said. "Never mind who I am. The guys who own the place know it can't be used again so they're going to collect on their insurance policy."

Hurriedly he gathered a pile of old towels and napkins from the kitchen. He set fire to them and tended the blaze carefully. After five minutes he threw on a pile of towels and table cloths. They smothered the flame, but caused smoke to pour all around the place. He went back to the phone booth, dodged inside and waited.

It didn't take long for Ruffino to appear. He came in through the kitchen with four of his men. The smoke was so thick that its source could no longer be seen.

Ruffino coughed and walked directly over to a huge brass vase standing at the corner of the bandstand. He tipped it over, managed to stand it upside down and then gave it a push. It rolled away. He picked something up, stuffed it into his pocket and

started out towards the kitchen.

"Hey, Mitch," one of the men called. "This ain't much of a fire. Just a lot of old rags smoking. I could do a better job with a cigarette lighter."

Ruffino stopped short as though shot. He turned, walked swiftly to the source of the smoke and shouted orders. The men spread to cover every window and exit. Gun in hand he began snooping around.

As he approached the telephone booth Bishop knew the game was up and catapulted from his hiding place. Before the crook could get his gun into position, Bishop had knocked it out of his hand, stepped back and prepared to knock this big bulk of a man galley west.

His fist started driving a punch and stopped in midair. What if the punch killed Ruffino? He backed up a little. Ruffino gave a shout and charged. He fought back, but there was no steam in any of his blows. He was battered to the floor and kicked until he was almost unconscious.

Ruffino stepped back.

"Look at him, boys. The big, tough copper who'd slug Joe Louis. Look at him, he ain't got any more fight in him than a butterfly."

ONE of the men, a small-time crook named Nolley, came forward. He'd found a quart bottle of liquor some place and had already consumed most of its contents.

"Yeah, Mitch," he said, "the guy ain't got a bit of fight left in him. We found that out before. Just the same he's still got a brain and must have set this phony fire."

"Take him out to the car," Ruffino barked. "We can't stay here. The smoke will draw attention. Snap into it. If he tries anything, wave a fist in his face and he'll faint."

Bishop lay on the floor of the car for about ten minutes. When Ruffino came out he was seized, yanked to his feet and marched into a large garage. Dimly, through swollen eyes, he saw

a blank wall open under Ruffino's manipulations with a hidden spring. Beyond was a room full of tires stacked to the ceiling. They went in.

One of the thugs took another punch at him and he fell heavily. Ruffino kicked him into a corner and someone took his gun and blackjack. He seemed helpless.

Nolley, the diminutive crook, finished off his liquor and flung the empty bottle at Bishop. He began to sing gayly. Ruffino silenced him with a curse.

"You want to draw cops here?" he demanded. "I shouldn't have let you take that bottle of booze. Now shut up and think. We've got to figure a way to get rid of this copper."

"Lemme plug him," Nolley laughed. "That's the easiest way."

"Nix," Ruffino snapped. "This has to look as though it was an accident."

"I don't like killing cops," another man said cautiously. "Even cowardly cops. It's too risky. Why not just tie him up, get rid of this stuff and blow?"

"Because this is too good a thing to drop," Ruffino said. "Besides he knows too much or else he wouldn't have tricked me into visiting the club. Hoist him up. I'm going to make the sniveling rat talk."

They shoved him into a chair. Ruffino bent over him and poised a clenched fist in front of his eyes.

"See this? You'll tell me everything you know or else I'll make hamburger out of your face. Come on, talk. Why did you go back to the club?"

Bishop winced.

"I was only guessing," he admitted. "I figured Mason had heard something about me that made him mad. Reporters always take notes and I knew the book Mason usually carried wasn't on him when his body was picked up. You got it, Ruffino, during the confusion after he went down. He'd found out about you and your tire racket. You didn't dare have the book on you in case you were searched, so

you dumped it in the big vase. Until last night a cop was on duty at the club to keep it from reopening so you couldn't get back in to recover it."

"Smart guy," Ruffino nodded. "Anybody else know this?"

WHEN he didn't answer Ruffino hit him in the jaw and Bishop felt teeth loosened by the blow. For a second he almost jumped up and started to fight back, but again the restraint caused by Mason's death overcame him.

"He hasn't told anybody," Ruffino said. "The rest of the cops wouldn't have anything to do with him after what happened. Sure, I know I'm right. But we've got to knock him off. We must find a way to do it so that no suspicion will be aroused."

Nolley was very tight by now. He weaved around, enjoying the affair immensely. He put a finger against his nose and seemed to be thinking. A grin spread over his face.

"Mitch," he said thickly, "I got it. Just find some staircase, a nice high one. Take him there. Bust his neck like you did Mason's . . ."

"Nolley," Ruffino screamed. "Shut up. Somebody lay him out. He talks too much."

Bishop, his eyes blazing, sat erect in the chair. His swollen lips were parted as he sucked in huge gobs of air to steady his spinning senses. Ruffino had killed Mason. He'd jumped from the platform while his men surrounded the reporter. He'd broken his neck— Ruffino was plenty strong enough to do that. Afterward he'd hurried back to the platform and augmented his alibi by defending Steve Bishop.

Ruffino had done the killing! Bishop *knew* his punch hadn't been responsible. From the lips of a dumb, liquor-sodden thug had come the truth. Bishop's muscles grew rigid, his fingers tightened into great fists.

All chances were against him. Ruffino and three sober gorillas were

there, armed. Ruffino himself would kill gladly to keep the truth of his murder hidden.

That made no difference now. Bishop's mind went back swiftly. He'd never hit a man smaller than himself. Never taken a sucker poke at anyone. When he fought, it was fairly or with the odds on the side of his opponent.

Mason's theories were good, but not the truth. Bishop knew how to hold back the full force of his strength. He'd always been sure of that until Mason had died.

Ruffino gave him a peculiar glance and Bishop relaxed quickly. He set the flat of both feet firmly against the floor and waited. Ruffino took a leather bound notebook from his pocket, ripped pages out of it and made a pile of them on the floor. He lit a match.

Bishop came out of the chair like a thunderbolt. He was sore, but rage didn't dim his wits. He flung himself at the nearest gorilla. A fist slashed at the man's face and sent him reeling backwards. Another thug drew a gun. Bishop went for him in a crouch. His head hit the man's middle and Bishop finished the job with two fast ones to the chin.

A BULLET from Ruffino's gun crashed through the soft part of his side. A flesh wound that stung, but didn't handicap him. He flung himself at the third man, drove him back against the wall and then, out of the corner of his eye, saw Nolley side-step toward the door.

Ruffino saw him at the same instant and aimed his gun. Nolley realized what was about to happen. Fear sobered him. He let out a squeal of terror and tried to duck. The gun blasted. Whipped around by the bullet he fell.

Before Ruffino could get the gun slanted at Bishop, the ex-detective was at him. He wrenched the gun out of his hand, threw it into a corner and then slowly advanced.

"Put 'em up, Ruffino," Bishop said grimly. "If you don't, I'll paste that

face of yours into the hamburger you were talking about. Nolley and another of your boys broke into Mason's house right after his sister left to go to Headquarters. You sent them to make sure Mason had made no further notes. Am I right? Or do I pound the truth out of you?"

Ruffino was goaded into a fighting mood purely by desperation. He saw blood staining Bishop's shirt and figured him weakened by loss of blood. With a roar, the big crook charged and ran straight into a pile-driving punch that rocked him back on his heels.

One of the other men was stirring, so Bishop worked fast. When he was finished Ruffino lay on the floor, groaning. Bishop picked up the torn pages of the notebook. He lifted Nolley tenderly, carried him out of the room and laid him on a bench in the garage.

Ten minutes later Captain Burke and half a dozen detectives were there. Bishop pointed to the pages from Mason's notebook, now neatly arranged on a bench.

"There's the truth," he said. "Mason thought I was taking graft from Ruffino, that the fight I had with him was just a setup. I don't blame him. I should have pinched Ruffino and his pal that night. They are bootlegging tires, buying them from crooks who had raided other garages. Ruffino killed Mason and framed me because he figured that it would have me transferred at the very least. He even strengthened his story by defending me. Nolley knows the truth. He'll talk because Ruffino tried to silence him with a bullet. I didn't kill Mason. I know that now because I used every ounce of strength I had on Ruffino. I plastered him with everything I had and he isn't dead."

"All right, Steve," Captain Burke said. "When I'm wrong, I admit it. Report to me in the morning. I—hey, where are you going?"

"To see Tom Mason's sister and tell her the truth. Being demoted, branded as a killer and thinking myself a coward was easy to take compared to the look she gave me the night Tom was killed. I've got to set her right."

Next Issue's Novel: **MONARCHS OF MURDER**, a baffling mystery thriller by **C. K. M. SCANLON**

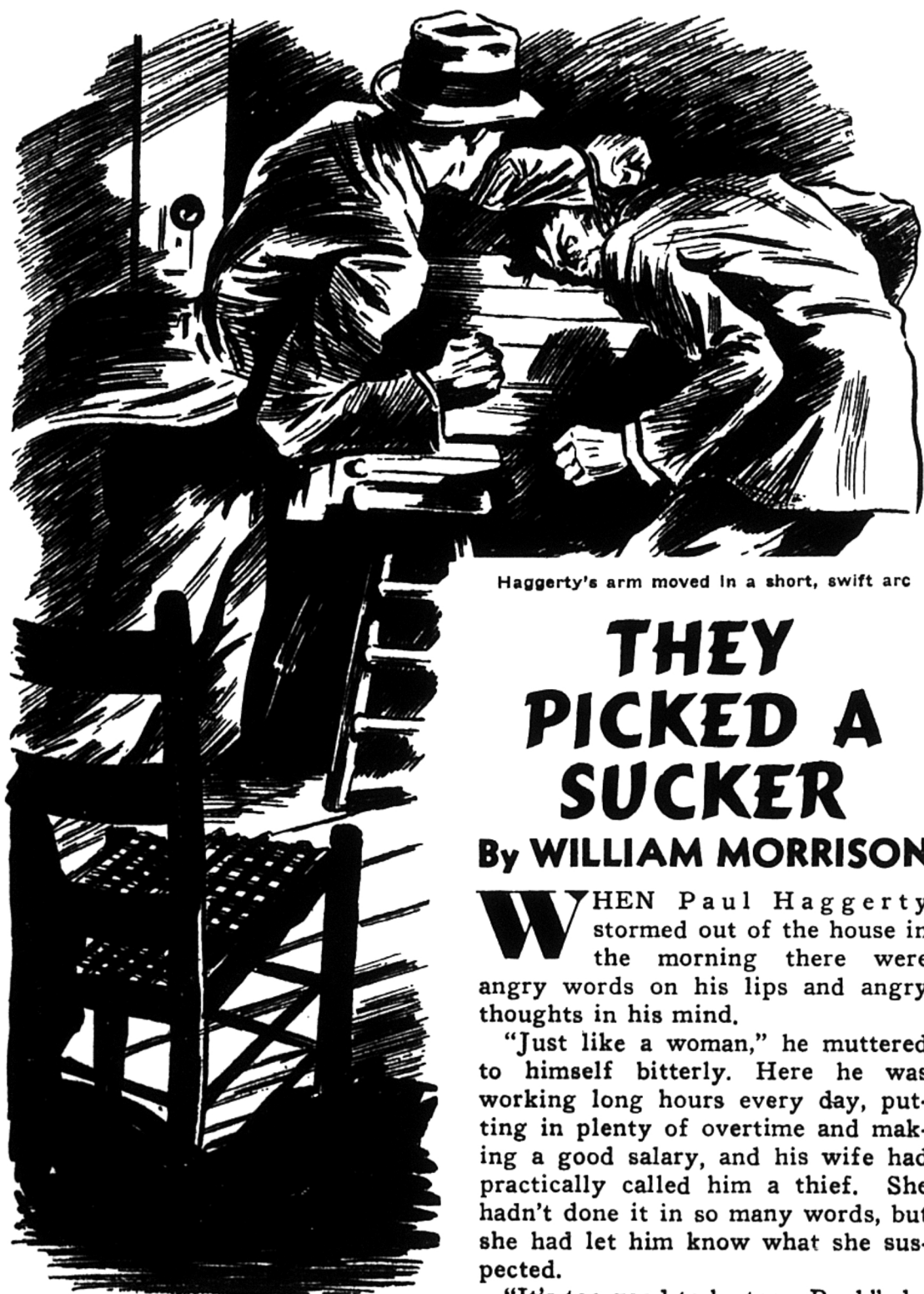
**YOU CAN'T
HURT MY
FEELINGS!**

**I KNOW IT
- I USE
STAR BLADES!**

6NX PROCESS

DOUBLE EDGE

SINGLE EDGE



Haggerty's arm moved in a short, swift arc

THEY PICKED A SUCKER

By WILLIAM MORRISON

WHEN Paul Haggerty stormed out of the house in the morning there were angry words on his lips and angry thoughts in his mind.

"Just like a woman," he muttered to himself bitterly. Here he was working long hours every day, putting in plenty of overtime and making a good salary, and his wife had practically called him a thief. She hadn't done it in so many words, but she had let him know what she suspected.

"It's too good to be true, Paul," she had insisted. "Why should you be getting paid so well for working overtime? And why should it be you who are chosen every time instead of somebody else from the office."

"I'm chosen because they know I'm a good man."

"You're not that good," she had insisted. "It's a job a lot of people

Paul Haggerty Plays a Little Hunch, and It Leads Him to the Exposure of a Big-Time Racket!

could do. I'm afraid, Paul. That money is being paid to you for something dishonest, and some day you'll be caught."

Haggerty growled to himself as he recalled the tone of her voice, the expression on her face. Oh, she was loyal, no doubt about that. That is, if it was loyalty first to let a man know she thought he was a thief, and then to let him know she would stick by him.

He kicked furiously at a loose brick some kid had dug up from the sidewalk, and then regretted it. The brick was a little harder than his toes. Then, as he walked along, for the first time he began really to think about the mess he was in.

He worked for the Royal Warehouse Corp., a big firm that owned many buildings stored full of valuable goods. He was an office assistant and clerk, and for the past month or so had been late every evening, checking out cargoes that were being shipped by truck. It was routine work, all of it. How could any sane person think there was crookedness in what he was doing?

As he reached the corner where he usually waited for his bus, he nodded greetings to someone he knew. But his mind went on.

"One thing Ann says is right," he admitted to himself. "If it's routine, anybody could do it. Why do they always choose me?"

That worried him. He knew that it wasn't enough of an answer to say that he was a good man. There were other good men. Why was he always the lucky one?

During the day, he was kept busy in the office, working at the files, checking up on unpaid accounts. It was not until quitting time approached that Steve Crosby, his immediate superior, came over to him.

"You're to put in a couple of hours more tonight, Paul," he said. "Okay with you?"

"Sure," Haggerty agreed. He was conscious of the fact that the other

men in the office were staring at him enviously. They never got the chance to earn a few extra dollars.

A sudden impulse stirred Haggerty.

"Say, Steve," he began, "how come I'm always the lucky one? Why don't the other boys ever get a chance at this overtime?"

"Why?" Steve Crosby looked puzzled. "I did send somebody else a few weeks ago. But Mr. Gordon, in the shipping department, told me you were the best. He likes you, Paul."

"Why?" It had sounded phoney enough when Haggerty had told his wife that he was better than the other men. Now, to hear that Mr. Gordon believed the same thing, made him feel uneasy. There were Adams, Clarke, Bryan, Quinlan—he could reel off half a dozen names of men who could check over a cargo and sign their names on a shipping slip just as well as he could. Tonight he'd better find out what the real reason was.

THE last stenographer was locking her desk when Haggerty put on his hat and coat and strolled casually over to the shipping department.

"Better get going," suggested Gordon. "The faster you work, the sooner you get out of here."

Haggerty nodded. He had heard that remark before, and attached no significance to it. Now it struck him as a little peculiar. Was the idea behind it to get him moving so fast that he wouldn't know exactly what he was doing?

A group of truckmen were moving a miscellaneous collection of articles out from one section of a warehouse, and Haggerty went over to check them against the list on his shipping slip. He was a little more leisurely about it than usual, but so far as he could see there was nothing wrong.

The truckmen had to have his signature on a duplicate slip, and Haggerty signed his name rapidly, as he always did, below the signature of J.

T. Pender, the company's general manager.

"If Ann could see me at this kind of work," he thought, "she wouldn't be crazy enough to think I'm a crook."

The trucks pulled out, and other trucks came rolling in. Haggerty checked over a new list of articles, found everything in order, and began to sign his name. He had just finished signing his name when he stopped suddenly. J. T. Pender's okay wasn't on this one.

"Mr. Gordon!" he called.

The head of the shipping department looked up impatiently. "What is it?"

"This slip isn't in order. Mr. Pender didn't sign it."

"Well, I'll be!" exploded Gordon. "After all this time, you're still bothered about that! Haggerty, you ought to know better. This is just a matter of routine. Sign Pender's name above your own, as you always do when he forgets."

"Yes, Mr. Gordon, but it isn't the right thing to do. Don't you think we ought to get in touch with Mr. Pender—"

"And have him come back here just to sign his name to a meaningless slip of paper?" snorted Gordon. "What do you want to do, get us both fired? Don't be a fool."

"All right, Mr. Gordon."

Haggerty wrote, "J. T. Pender, genl. mgr." neatly above his own signature. Then he stared at the slip again. He hadn't attempted to imitate Pender's handwriting, but had just signed in his own. Now, as his eyes ran over the slip, he was vaguely aware that something was wrong. It wasn't merely that part of the cargo was valuable, consisting of bales of silk, which were almost impossible to get. Something about the slip itself had struck an uneasy chord in his brain.

He couldn't decide what it was. He was still staring at it when a truck driver yelled, "Hey, didn't you sign

that thing yet?" The truck driver wanted his duplicate slip.

"Just a minute," Haggerty muttered. Then he clenched his teeth. So they were trying to hurry him along, were they? Well, he'd take his time, and if they didn't like it. . . .

He moved away from the two waiting truckmen, disregarding the scowls on their faces. There was a collection of old shipping slips in the office of the warehouse, and he went there, switched on the lights, and picked out a slip at random.

This slip seemed right. But when he compared it with the one he had started to sign, he realized again that in some subtle way, that first slip was different.

They were of the same size, on the same kind of yellow paper, printed with the same kind of ink. They were identical in every respect from the words *Royal Warehouse Corp.* at the top to the phrase *Security guaranteed* at the bottom. And yet . . .

Suddenly he had it. It was the type! The type on the slip he had started to sign was cleaner-looking than that on the old slip. Little curlicues on the corners of some of the letters were missing, and the difference had produced a subtle change in the general appearance of the slip. That meant the slip he had been asked to sign was counterfeit.

That in turn could mean only one thing. Somebody who had no right to them was trying to get away with those bales of silk. And that same somebody was playing him for a sucker.

HAGGERTY smiled bitterly to himself. He had been a fool not to see earlier that something was wrong. And the fact that he was easy-going was the reason he had always been the lucky one to work overtime!

Whoever had been doing the dirty work had been ringing in a counterfeit shipping slip every now and then, a slip that didn't have J. T. Pender's

signature on it. There had been no need to forge Pender's signature. He himself had been kind enough to sign his name to those slips at the same time as he signed Pender's. But was he merely "signing" Pender's name?

He shook his head. If this ever came to the attention of the police, he would be accused of forging Pender's signature. Nobody would believe, as Gordon had claimed, that writing the words "J. T. Pender" was merely a routine matter. He'd wind up behind the bars. And his wife. . . .

Well, she'd stick by him, as she had indicated she would. But more than ever, she'd be convinced that he was a crook. And in a way, she'd be right, for he had been helping a bunch of crooks all along.

"Haggerty!"

An angry voice shouted his name. Paul Haggerty's eyes narrowed. That was Gordon, the man who had always asked that he be used for this work. Well, why shouldn't he want Haggerty around? Haggerty was a sucker who always did what he was told to, even if it meant cutting his own throat.

"Yes, Mr. Gordon," he replied smoothly.

"What the devil are you doing in that office?"

"Will you please come in here, Mr. Gordon? I've got something to show you."

Gordon stamped in, his face red with anger.

"What's wrong with you tonight, Haggerty? Those truckmen are out there waiting, and here you are, killing time—"

Haggerty closed the door quietly.

"Sit down, Mr. Gordon."

"I will not. I came in here to see what you were doing."

"Sit down!" Haggerty's eyes glittered. He pushed Gordon into a chair, stood over him glowering.

He could see that Gordon was suddenly afraid.

"What's the meaning of this, Haggerty? You must be mad!"

"No, I'm not mad, I'm just beginning to use my brains. Take a look at this slip, Mr. Gordon. No, don't touch it, just look at it."

"I don't see anything wrong."

"I didn't either at first. But compare the type with the type on this old slip. Different, aren't they?"

"What of it?" asked Gordon.

"Nothing much. Only that the numbers aren't far from the same. That means that this new one is counterfeit. And I accepted it for the real thing, signed J. T. Pender's name, started to sign my own. As a result, those truckmen out there are going to get away with a lot of bales of silk they're not entitled to, and I'll be held responsible for it."

Gordon's eyes almost popped out of his head.

"You mean that something is crooked?"

"My, what a terrible shock, Mr. Gordon! You're darn right something is crooked, and it's been arranged to make me look like the crook. I've been thinking about those truckmen who are in such a hurry out there. They were here a couple of days ago, and I shouldn't be surprised if they took their cargo out on another counterfeit slip. And do you know what that cargo was, Mr. Gordon? More silk! And before that, I seem to remember that they took out another valuable cargo."

"We should—er, notify the police!" stammered Gordon.

"Sure, and what would we get out of it? Those truckmen would just say they didn't know anything about the slip being wrong! They were just following orders."

"Then what—"

"I'll tell you what!" snapped Haggerty. "I haven't used my head for much this past month, but I'm using it now. First I want to know why you always insisted on having me to check up on what was going out. And don't

give me any baloney about my being a good man, either."

GORDON'S eyes suddenly shifted. "Why, I was told to ask for the same man each time, so that he'd have a chance to get used to the work!"

"Who told you that?"

"I forget. And look here, Haggerty, by what right do you stand here asking me questions? You're forgetting yourself!"

"No, I'm not. I'm just remembering that it's a good idea for me to stay out of jail." Haggerty's face grew bleak. "Gordon, I don't know whether you're in on this racket or not."

"Of course I'm not!" replied Gordon quickly.

"Then you'll tell me who gave you those orders to ask for the same man each time."

"I've already told you that I don't remember."

"Oh yes you do," said Haggerty harshly. "You remember all right. Only you don't want to accuse anyone higher up for fear of losing your own job. You see, Gordon, I'm beginning to get an idea of how this racket has been worked. Whoever those crooks are, they've had to have somebody on the inside, somebody who knows the ropes in this company."

"It might be somebody high up, or it might be you. But eventually, when the real owners of the goods start demanding their stuff, then the dirty work comes out into the open. The goods are gone, probably disposed of through fences. The only things that are left are those counterfeit slips, incriminating me."

"So I get sent to jail, and the real crooks go free." Haggerty shook his head. "It may look like a beautiful set-up to you, Gordon, but I don't like it, and I'm not going to stand for it. Who told you to ask for me?"

"I don't know," repeated Gordon sullenly. "And if I told you, what good would it do you? You'd have no proof."

"You're right," admitted Haggerty. "It's a slick arrangement. When I'm caught, I tell my story, and what happens? I say to the police that you asked me to sign Pender's name as a routine matter. So they come to you to learn if I'm telling the truth—and your memory is so good that you forget all about it. You're so innocent you don't even know anything about counterfeit slips. It just looks as if I'm trying to pass the buck."

"The cops ask you for that same name I've been asking about. Even if you give it to them, what of it? They wouldn't believe any big shot could be guilty, especially if there was no proof. But the chances are that you don't even give them the name. You forget again. Because if the big shot isn't caught, and stays with the firm, you want to keep your job."

Gordon was silent. He started to get up, and Haggerty pushed him back into the chair.

With that Gordon lost his head. "Get away from me!" he yelled. His fist swung frantically, caught Haggerty on the jaw.

As Haggerty stepped back, he could feel the flurry of punches landing on his face, not hard, but annoying. His own right arm moved in a short swift arc. Gordon's head jerked back, and he fell to the floor.

Haggerty ran to the phone, dialed rapidly. "Get me the police," he snapped at the operator. A moment later he was talking to a desk sergeant.

"Listen, officer, this is the Royal Warehouse Corporation," he explained. "There's a truck here trying to get away with a load of silk. . . . What's that? Who am I?"

"Hey, buddy," a rough voice yelled at him, "we're tired of waitin'! Sign that slip, or else we go without it!"

Things were happening too fast for him.

Haggerty, his head in a whirl, laid the phone receiver down on a

desk, and ran out to the impatient truckmen.

"Okay," growled one of them. "Got that slip?"

Haggerty scrawled a hurried signature and forced a smile. "Here you are, boys." He held out the duplicate slip.

"It took you a devil of a while. Anything wrong with it?"

"No, it was just that old stuffed shirt back there kept bothering me to look up some files for him, and we had an argument. Sorry to have kept you waiting."

"We got an oil leak, or we wouldn't be in such a hurry," explained the driver. He and his companion moved forward to climb into the front of the truck.

Haggerty thought quickly. Should he run to continue his conversation with the police, report the license number of the truck? By the time the police arrived the truck would be gone, and the number would do them no good. License plates could be shifted around.

That made up his mind. Swinging open one of the rear doors, he leaped in, and pulled the door shut after him. By the time the truckmen were in their seats, he was hidden safely away between two bales of silk.

AS THE truck rolled along, Haggerty realized nervously that he was taking a long chance. He had to get to the man who had arranged the robberies, and catch him with the goods. Otherwise the evidence of those counterfeit slips he had already signed would be enough to send him to jail. He hoped that neither of the two husky truckmen would get the idea of examining the cargo.

He thought back to his unfinished conversation with the police sergeant. Would the police decide that the whole thing was somebody's idea of a practical joke, and forget it? The chance was that they'd at least come to the warehouse to investigate. And

if they did he had to leave them a trail.

Up front, close behind the driver's seat, was an oil can. He pushed back the bales of silk, and picked it up. It was probably used for the truck, and held plenty of oil.

The police would catch sight of the pool of oil the truck had left in its long wait. Unfortunately, at the few traffic stops it would make, it wouldn't leave enough oil to be noticeable. It was up to him to remedy that.

The next time the truck came to a halt, Haggerty poked the spout of the oil can out through a hole between the sides and floor of the truck, and pressed the bottom of the can. When the truck started again, he had left a noticeable pool of oil. He did the same thing every time the driver stopped for a traffic light.

He could feel the truck twist around corners and roll up and down several hills. He couldn't see past the driver's seat, and from where he was lying, it was impossible to tell in which direction the truck was going. He could hear the two truckmen talking together occasionally, but they spoke in low voices, and he couldn't catch their words above the noise of the truck itself.

After a half hour, the truck came to a longer stop than usual. "There he is," said one of the truckmen.

Haggerty crawled slowly toward the front of the truck, peered out through a crack between two boards. The men were clambering down.

"Thought you'd never get here," grunted the newcomer.

"Couple of the guys at the place had some trouble," replied the driver.

"Anything wrong about the load?"

Haggerty could detect the anxiety behind the question.

The driver shook his head.

"They just had some business of their own they were arguin' about."

"Well, that doesn't concern me."

The newcomer, clad roughly like the others, climbed into the driver's seat.

"Will your boss need us again?" asked the previous driver.

"Can't say. I guess he'll let you know if he does. So long."

The truck started into motion once more, and Haggerty thought over what had happened. The people who had arranged this racket were certainly doing everything to cover their tracks.

The two big truckmen who had taken the load probably didn't even know they were engaged in anything crooked. And if they did happen to suspect, they'd be unable to tell where the stolen goods would be taken.

As for the new driver, he was probably one of the crooks themselves. Haggerty puzzled for a moment over the reference to "your boss." Did that mean that the new driver was merely acting for someone else? Or was that just a gag of his, to pretend that he was small fry, and help conceal from the first two truckmen his real part in the robberies? It looked that way to Haggerty.

"Lucky the police aren't close behind," he muttered to himself. "If this guy had become suspicious, he'd have ducked before getting on the truck, and that would have meant the end of the trail."

They were driving along rapidly now, and Haggerty began to wonder what their destination was. From the steady way in which the truck was rolling now, without pausing for pedestrians or traffic lights, he was convinced they were in open country. But he was afraid to try to make sure by peering out as he had done before.

He could feel the heavy vehicle slow down, then come to a stop. He heard the driver clamber down to the ground.

Then the two rear doors of the truck were pulled open, and by the light of an arc lamp many feet away he could see that the truck was in a garage.

The black silhouette of the driver began to move closer.

THERE was going to be no more hiding now. Haggerty stood up, straightening his cramped muscles. Just then the driver turned his head. For a moment, Haggerty saw a dirty, oil-smeared face. Then he heard a snarl. The driver had caught sight of him.

Haggerty launched himself at the other man with all his strength. The driver stepped aside, and Haggerty's shoulder just managed to catch him in the ribs, whirl him around. Then Haggerty saw something flash in the air, and realized too late that the driver had a gun. He hadn't counted on that.

He tried to duck, but the gun came down on his head. He hadn't even time to be conscious of the pain when everything blacked out before him.

When he came to, he realized that his hands and feet were tied. Except for himself, the truck was now empty. All the bales of silk had been removed.

He could hear noises from the garage, and in a moment, the driver climbed into the truck and looked at him. He didn't say anything, he just looked. His back was to the light, and all Haggerty could see of him was a sinister silhouette.

"All right, you've got me," said Haggerty. "Now what are you going to do with me?"

The man just continued to stare at him, and suddenly, Haggerty's skin went cold and clammy. He was sweating ice water.

"Look," he went on, "I don't know who you are, and I don't know where this place is, so there's nothing I can squeal about. I just got into this truck to keep from being framed myself, and I'm not a cop."

Still the man didn't answer, and Haggerty wondered for a moment whether he was deaf and dumb. But deaf mutes didn't drive trucks. He could hear and talk all right, Haggerty decided; he just didn't want to say anything.

As a matter of fact, what was there to say? What would he himself have done in this man's place? Say nothing, and put the man who had followed him out of the way.

Haggerty's clothes were wet with perspiration. If the police were fast enough in following that trail he had left for them, he'd be all right. But if they delayed, if the driver pulled the truck out of the garage, with Haggerty now unable to leave a trail of oil puddles . . . He'd have to fight for time, keep the man interested until the police could get here.

"Listen," he said, "let me go, and I'll forget all about this. If you kill me, you'll get the chair. Gordon will put the cops wise."

So far as he knew, he might have said the wrong thing. Gordon might be in on this deal. But if he wanted to keep the man interested, he couldn't afford to hesitate or show a trace of doubt.

"We got onto those counterfeit slips several days ago. We had an idea what the racket was about even then. We knew you'd have a hard time getting away with genuine slips because they were numbered. That's why you used counterfeits. You left Pender's name unsigned, didn't even sign a fake signature because you wanted me to do that, wanted to frame me."

Haggerty paused to see how the man was taking it. He hadn't moved. "Gordon and I decided," Haggerty went on, "to wait until another truck came along, and then see what we could do."

"You heard the other driver say that a couple of men at the warehouse had an argument. That's what I told him. Actually, Gordon and I were stalling. We notified the police, and stalled as long as we could, and then I climbed into the truck."

The man was moving now, and it suddenly seemed to Haggerty that in his haste to talk he had said the wrong thing. He had told the man the police

were on his trail, warned him to hurry. There was a monkey wrench in the driver's hand as he came closer, and Haggerty knew that the man meant to bring it down on his head.

DESPERATION lent Haggerty more strength than he ordinarily possessed. His hands and his feet were tied, but tied separately. He drew his legs back, then kicked up viciously as hard as he could. He caught the driver in the abdomen, and the man went over backwards against the side of the truck, and slipped to the floor.

Haggerty could hear him groaning, and then he saw the arm with the wrench rising again. Using his back and his feet as alternate supports, he inched across the truck and kicked the driver again. This time the man lay still.

Haggerty stared across the truck at his motionless body, and continued to sweat. Sooner or later, somebody was sure to come to this hideout. If it was the police following his trail, well and good. If it wasn't . . .

He shuddered. He no longer had any doubt as to what would happen to him if the driver's accomplices found him here. He tugged desperately at his bonds, with no success. After a time, he heard an automobile stopping outside the garage, and his heart began to pound. Then he heard footsteps.

A figure cut off the light in front of him, and Haggerty groaned. It was Gordon. So he had been in with the criminals all along. No wonder the man hadn't believed his story.

There were a couple of men behind Gordon, both big and burly, and Haggerty stared at them, trying to make out their faces. Then he heard Gordon's voice.

"Here they are! Piled up in the garage!"

"Where's Haggerty?"

Gordon peered into the truck.

"Here he is!"

And then Haggerty got a good look

at the other two men. They were policemen, and had him out of his bonds and on his feet in no time.

"We trailed the truck by the oil puddles," explained Gordon. "Lucky for you the engine leaked."

The explanation that Haggerty himself had caused those puddles could come later.

"I was afraid the cops might think I was playing a joke on them," said Haggerty. "How come they didn't?"

"We did," returned one of the cops.

"When I recovered from the blow—er, the accident to my jaw," Gordon put in, "I saw the telephone receiver off its hook. A moment later, the police arrived. I convinced them that you hadn't been joking. You see, I realized that I had been partly responsible for getting you into this unfortunate situation, and I felt rather guilty."

One of the cops had been staring at the driver.

"You fellows know this monkey?" he asked. "He ain't any crook I ever saw."

"Judging from the way he worked this racket," put in the other cop, "he must have been operating in the warehouse."

Gordon glanced at the grimy face.

"Some of the company officers have been losing money on the stock market, and might have tried this scheme to make up for their losses. But this is no one that I recognize."

To Haggerty the face was beginning to seem vaguely familiar. He searched around in the tool chest in back of the driver's seat, found a none too clean rag, and rubbed it hard over the man's face.

The man groaned.

"Part of his nose," exclaimed Gordon, "is coming off!"

Haggerty threw the rag away, and then both he and Gordon stared. The driver was J. T. Pender himself!

It was only a few minutes later that Haggerty called his wife.

"Sorry I'm so late, sweetheart," he told her. "Sure, I'm all right. I just had a job to clean up. And by the way, Ann, thanks for thinking I was a crook! Because if you hadn't, I'd be going to jail right now!"

He glanced out of the phone booth at the figure of Pender, still dressed as a truckman, and wedged firmly between the two cops in their squad car.

"Thanks, pal," he said, "for taking my place there!"



"Well—Where's the Corpse You Were Talking About—Are You Sure You Were Here?"

THE ROOM was empty. The rug was on the floor, but Petroff wasn't. Sheriff Shea looked at Kirby, who had come running to him with a strange story of mysterious death, in a decidedly suspicious way.

THIS VANISHING CORPSE is only one of the many mysterious happenings at the Petroff mansion in *DEATH IS A VAMPIRE*, a novelet by Robert Bloch packed with amazing surprises!

COMING NEXT ISSUE



FATAL MUSIC

By C. K. M. SCANLON

After Arranging for a Fool-Proof Alibi, Donald Hunter Slaughters an Old Foe and Discovers One Tiny Slip Can Bring Disaster to a Murderer!

DONALD HUNTER sat playing the big old upright piano with melody at his fingertips and murder in his heart. Over and over he hammered out the same popular song—verse and chorus and then verse and



Hunter stared at the piano

chorus again. He played it loudly and mechanically, without any variations just as he had done for the last six nights.

He smiled sardonically as he heard a pounding above his head. Obviously his neighbors in the apartment above did not care for the music. That suited Hunter. If they disliked his music enough, they would remember it, and that would give him a perfect alibi. He

needed a good alibi because he intended to kill a man!

"John Farrow won't like my music either," he muttered.

Hunter's mood changed, as he sat there—a thin-faced cruel-eyed man with wavy hair. He played softly, hands sweeping over the keyboard, his touch that of a trained pianist. The pounding on the floor above ceased, for this music no longer annoyed the neighbors.

As he played Hunter's thoughts went back into the past. Ten years ago he had been a pianist with a famous dance orchestra. He had not been content with the money he had been making then. He had needed more and more cash and he had found it by blackmailing certain wealthy men and women whom he knew had skeletons in their closets.

It had been Detective John Farrow who had finally trapped him and presented a strong enough case for Donald Hunter to be sent to prison for a ten year stretch. They had been long, dismal years in which his hatred for Farrow had steadily mounted.

Hunter finally finished his term and had been released just three weeks before. In his mind there had been but one ruling thought—to find a way to kill John Farrow without being caught.

He had been clever about it. He had gone to the detective and told Farrow that he harbored no animosity. The past was over and gone, and he would be a good boy from now on.

Farrow had listened and smiled. Retired now, and gray-haired, he reminded Hunter of a weary old bloodhound.

"Since I'm no longer working for the police department what you do is not my worry, Hunter," he had said. "Glad there is no hard feelings though."

HUNTER had rented an unfurnished apartment in the same building that Farrow lived. He had been able to get a job with another dance band, and to furnish his place on the in-

stalment plan. The old upright piano was something special, and he had been careful in selecting it.

Donald Hunter was sure that no one save the dealer from whom he had bought it knew the secret about that piano. It was one of the old electric player pianos that had been popular twenty years ago. The front space where the rolls were inserted had a small panel door that he always kept closed and there were no foot-pedals visible for it ran by an electric motor.

He was always careful to keep some sheet music propped up on the front of it, and he usually played it as a piano and not as a pianola. But that one popular song, "Whispering," that he played over and over loudly every night was exactly as it was played on the player piano roll he had of the same number.

"Tonight Farrow dies," said Hunter as he stopped playing and rose from the piano stool. "He always stays home on Wednesday nights to listen to the Eddie Cantor program on the radio."

Hunter went into the bedroom and found the long-barreled pistol, with the silencer on it, that he had managed to get through one of his underworld friends. He thrust the gun into his pocket and poured himself a drink of Scotch. Strange that he should feel nervous now.

The electric lights flickered but he paid no attention as he stepped out into the hall. Farrow's apartment was at the other end of the corridor. Hunter knew it would not take him more than five minutes to reach it and get back to his own apartment.

He saw there was no one in the hall, and he went hastily back into the living room and switched on the player piano. As the melody of the verse of "Whispering" came loudly to his ears he closed the door of the apartment from the outside—but left it unlatched.

He raced down the hall to 3B and rang Farrow's bell. He knew that the detective lived alone and had few visitors. Farrow answered the bell and stood looking at the man who stood there glaring at him.

"Hunter!" exclaimed Farrow. "What's wrong? You look as if you've seen a ghost."

Hunter did not speak. He snatched the gun out of his pocket as Farrow

stepped back into the small hall of the apartment. He fired the silenced barrel aimed at Farrow's heart. The detective tried to say something. Then he pitched forward on his face, lifeless.

"Ten years I waited for this moment," muttered Hunter as he drew the door closed. "And now it's done."

He broke off in horror as darkness engulfed him. At first he thought he had gone suddenly blind. Next he surmised that the lights in the hall had burned out and relief swept over him for an instant. Then it vanished.

It had grown quite still and he no longer could hear the electric piano playing. Evidently the music roll he had left going behind him had reached the end and was rewinding. He heard deep voices—two men coming up the stairs in the darkness.

"If I'd known that I'd be wandering around in the dark like this, I'd never agreed to come around to John Farrow's place tonight," said one of the men. "Guess there must be something wrong with the lights. I know it isn't a blackout—no sirens blowing."

"Yeah, you're right," said the other man. "A fine way for a couple of good detectives like us to spend an evening, ain't it, Bill."

Detectives! Hunter flattened himself against a wall of the hall. They had reached the head of the stairs and were coming closer. If they accidentally bumped into him in the dark they would grab him and ask what he was doing there.

They went by without noticing him and he edged his way along until he reached the door of his own apartment and stepped inside. It was dark. He fumbled for matches and lighted the two candles that stood on either end of the top of the piano.

THE light made him feel better, even though it was dim and flickering. He seated himself at the piano and began to play.

He was still playing a few minutes later when two men walked into the living room.

"Donald Hunter?" one of them asked as he stood looking at the man at the piano. "That you?"

"That's right," said Hunter. He stopped playing and swung around on

the stool. "Who are you? What do you want?"

"Detectives Nash and Blake from headquarters," said the taller of the two men. "We just found John Farrow murdered. Thought you might be able to help us."

"Farrow murdered?" exclaimed Hunter. "Good grief! Who did it?"

"We don't know," said Blake staring at Hunter. "Maybe you heard somebody quarreling with him or something, huh?"

"No, I'm sorry, but I didn't." Hunter shook his head. "I've been here playing the piano all evening."

"Yeah, so one of your neighbors we met in the hall told us." Nash smiled. "Not good—but loud. Said you'd been driving him nuts the way you been hammering 'Whispering' over and over every night."

"I always liked that song," said Blake. "It was popular when it first came out in Nineteen-twenty and they still play it." He smiled at Hunter. "Still if you've been here playing the piano all evening you wouldn't know who killed Farrow."

"No," said Nash. "Guess this guy is no help to us at all."

The electric lights came on suddenly. An instant later the electric player piano started up. The strains of the chorus of "Whispering" began to bang out loudly where it had stopped the minute before. Hunter started at the piano with horror in his eyes. He had forgotten to switch it off.

Nash and Blake just stood looking at him until the roll reached the end and began to rewind.

"I remember you now," Blake said. "You did a lot of talking in court ten years ago when John Farrow proved you were a blackmailer and you got sent to prison. Why you even told Farrow you'd kill him some day."

"Interesting." Nash suddenly grabbed Hunter, frisked him and drew out the gun with the silencer on it. "Nice," said Nash. "A ballistics test will prove this is the gun that fired the bullet that killed Farrow."

"Your alibi was loud but not good enough, Hunter," said Blake grimly. "Do you hear the death chair whispering?"

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*A True Story
of Crime*



Belle killed him
one night with
an ax

MARRIED TO MURDER

By SAMUEL MINES

*Meek-Looking Belle Gunness, Attractive Indiana Farmer,
Reaped Profitable Harvests from Over 150 Victims!*

BLUEBEARD, who murdered six wives and strung them up in his linen closet, was a piker compared to Belle Gunness, pretty Indiana housewife and farmer, who killed between 180 and 200 prospective husbands and other people and never once came under suspicion!

Far from being suspected, there was great shock and sympathy in the countryside when one night in April, 1908, the comely widow's farmhouse burned down and she and her three children were thoroughly cremated.

Nobody had any idea of dirty work when the routine police investigation was begun. Then someone remembered that a farmhand named Lamphere, who had either left or been fired a day or two before, had been heard making threats against Mrs. Gunness.

Lamphere was picked up and toasted once over lightly on the police grill. To their astonishment, he broke down and confessed that he had killed Mrs. Gunness and her children with an ax as they slept, and then fired the house.

"Why did you kill them?" he was asked.

"I had to," Lamphere whimpered. "She would have killed me. I knew too much."

"Too much about what?"

"She was a murderer!" Lamphere groaned. "She got men to come to the farm by advertising in matrimonial papers—and when they got there, she killed them!"

"Where are the bodies?" the cops asked, remembering that a sound crime must have its corpus delicti.

"I'll show you," Lamphere volunteered.

"They're buried all over the farm."

Still skeptical, the constabulary went out and started digging. Their skepticism vanished and presently a sick horror took its place. Wherever they dug, there seemed to be bodies. Men, women, even little children. Quicklime had partially destroyed the corpses, but enough was left to make sure they were human.

Beneath the cellar of the farmhouse they discovered a deep pit, and this was full of human bones.

Once on the track, a full-fledged investigation was pressed forward and the whole gruesome and astonishing story was brought to light.

Belle Gunness was a young Norwegian, who had come to America and married, while still in her teens, a Swede named Albert Sorenson. Taking the precaution to insure him, she poisoned him in 1900.

She then established a child nursery in Chicago and when the police finished checking on this establishment, they had definitely ascertained that twenty-one infants had vanished forever while in her care.

It would seem incredible that the mothers of the children made no trouble, never went to the police nor began an investigation. But the plain hard truth is that the woman was never even touched by the finger of suspicion.

Female Bluebeard

With the money she now had, she bought the Indiana farm which later earned itself the title of "Death Farm." She met and married Gunness, whose name she retained, though she killed him one night with an ax.

There is some evidence that Gunness was killed because he had learned too much, for apparently at this time Belle had made some kind of murder partnership with a man named Hoch. This Bluebeard had his own specialty—he advertised for wives with means and then murdered them for the money they brought him. It also appears that he sent some of his wives on a visit to Mrs. Gunness, who killed them for him. Perhaps it was this that Gunness learned or suspected, which made his demise necessary.

At any rate, Hoch was caught, found guilty and executed. This left Belle without an accomplice, but she promptly borrowed Hoch's technique. She wrote out a matrimonial ad and inserted it in local papers all over the country. The police discovered dozens of them, all exactly alike.

PERSONAL. Comely widow, who owns large farm in one of the finest districts of La Porte County, Indiana, desires to make the acquaintance of a gentleman unusually well provided with a view to joining fortunes. No

replies by letter will be considered unless the sender is willing to follow an answer with a personal visit.

The visit was the important thing, as Belle was anxious to get her hands on the victim and not waste her time with correspondence. She always insisted that the prospective bridegroom bring along his cash as a sign of good faith. And when it came to exchanging pictures, or anything like that, Belle always came off nicely because she was a most attractive female.

Men flocked to the bait. Again it seems incredible that in a small and nosy community, as most farm sections are, no one should have noticed the stream of visitors Mrs. Gunness had. But no one did. The neighbors' opinion of Belle was that she was a little flighty, but eminently respectable.

One-Way Visitors

Nevertheless, Mrs. Gunness' visitors all paid one-way visits.

They were received with love and kisses, wine and dined, and eventually tucked into bed in the guest chamber. This guest chamber was actually a prison and a murder room. The heavy door had a spring lock, the windows were barred and the walls were double, with a filling of soundproofing sawdust.

According to Lamphere, Belle's system was to enter the chamber while the victim was asleep, give him a shot of chloroform to keep him quiet and then brain him with an ax.

Nor did she confine her talents to men alone. If man, woman or child possessed something Belle Gunness wanted, she knew only one way of getting it. For example, two married women of her acquaintance owned considerable jewelry which caught her eye. She invited both of them, together with their husbands, to the farm for supper on Christmas day, 1906.

As she had calculated, they came dressed in their best, the women wearing their jewelry. The party was a gay one and lasted well into the night. But none of those four people ever went home and their bodies were among the few which were positively identified when dug up.

Belle's True Love

A letter written by Belle Gunness which the police managed to obtain, indicated she was no mean passion flower as an actress. The letter was sent to Andrew Helgelein in December, 1907, and it read:

"To the dearest friend in all the world:

I know you have now only to come to me and be my own. The king will be no happier than you when you get here. As for the queen,

her joy will be small when compared with mine. You will love my farm, sweetheart. In all La Porte County there's none will compare with it. It is on a nice green slope, near two lakes. When I hear your name mentioned, my heart beats in wild rapture for you. My Andrew, I love you!"

The joker came in the postscript. Proving that her great love had not altogether overcome her business sense, Belle had scribbled:

"Be sure and bring the three thousand dollars you are going to invest in the farm with you, and for safety's sake, sew them up in your clothes, dearest."

Apparently Andrew had no sales resistance, for his brother testified that he drew out the money and set out for Death Farm. He was actually seen by neighbors of Mrs. Gunness, driving with her in a buggy and the two seemed to be laughing and talking. But he was never seen again.

Curiously enough, Andrew Helgelein's

brother was the only one who ever began to inquire about his brother's fate and he was just starting such inquiries when the real discoveries broke.

Three Victims a Month

Lamphere, the farmhand who checked Belle Gunness' career, was given a twenty-year sentence. He left a confession which said that Mrs. Gunness had averaged three victims a month for five years on Death Farm. This makes a total of 180 murders, which added to those traced earlier, totals over 200. But allowing for exaggeration on Lamphere's part, the total is undoubtedly well over 100.

In the face of such monstrous lust for wealth and blood, the exact number loses significance. The important fact, for students of crime is that with the exception of the old pirates, or of Adolf Hitler, there have been few individuals in the history of the world to whom human life meant so little.

Next Issue's

CALENDAR OF MYSTERY



WITH the gasoline shortage still acute and with the rationing program in full swing, it comes as an appropriate and fitting business that Black Market gasoline should be the subject of the complete novel scheduled for our next number of THRILLING MYSTERY.

Rex Parker is a keen-minded newspaper reporter who dabbles in the solution of crime problems on the side. Officially a representative of the *Comet*, a big metropolitan daily, Parker is unofficially a private investigator. And he is a darned good one. But when he comes up against MONARCHS OF MURDER he has his hands full and he is plunged up to his neck in the direst sort of peril.

In this gripping novel of Black Market gasoline and ruthless criminals who have no patriotism, Rex Parker and his fiancée, Winnie Bligh, run to earth the most deadly rodent of the entire Atlantic Seaboard. Fitting indeed is his pseudonym—the Ferret.

You will enjoy and thrill to every page of this story about the Monarch Oil Company in the days just before the Big Inch pipeline was completed.

The author of MONARCHS OF MURDER, Mr. C. K. M. Scanlon, has done a splendid job on this novel.

As a companion yarn, we leap to the opposite side of the continent for the setting of

DEATH IS A VAMPIRE, a complete and rapid-paced novelet by Robert Bloch. In this novelet of the undead, Mr. Bloch presents us with a thrilling detective story which has sweep, movement, weirdness and sly humor skillfully blended.

Kirby, a feature writer, goes to the Petroff estate out from Los Angeles for an interview with the old eccentric, and walks into the craziest vampire set-up he ever heard of. But he gets one clue at the very start of things which keeps him from going mad in his pursuit of the blood-sucking human vampire. See if you can figure things out along with extemporaneous detective Kirby as you read DEATH IS A VAMPIRE.

Along with these two long stories, of course, there will be as many thrilling short stories as we can crowd into the issue. And Chakra will be with us again with more new true stories of the occult and the bizarre.

Thanks to many of you readers for some very nice letters. Believe me, your editor reads them all and follows suggestions where ever it is possible or feasible to do so. We want to make THRILLING MYSTERY exactly the sort of magazine that you folks want it to be.

So, how about others of you readers who never do so sitting down and writing us your comments and views? Simply address your cards and letters to The Editor, THRILLING MYSTERY, 11 East 39th Street, New York 16, N. Y. I'll be cordially glad to hear from you.

Until next issue!

—THE EDITOR.

Steve slugged him
as the man dug for
his pistol



UNDERGROUND GUNS

By FRANK JOHNSON

An American Flyer and a Greek Guerrilla Leader Team Together to Make Things Hot for an Already Sizzling Axis Partnership!

STEVE HALE was much too thin a man for his age and build. At twenty-six, he should have been pink-cheeked, aggressive looking and strong. Instead, his weight was forty pounds under and his bony cheeks accented the deep-ringed hollows around his eyes.

He came around a corner, stopped and then, with a grimace, stepped over a corpse that lay sprawled out across the sidewalk. Greece was like that. Men and women dropped dead

of starvation and exhaustion. So many people were dying, they could not bury them fast enough.

He looked like a Greek, this young American flyer who had been with the R.A.F. His swarthy complexion was the result of a simple dye given to him by peasants. His clothes were obviously Greek — albeit thin and threadbare and hanging like beggar's rags on his spare frame.

Steve Hale had been in Greece for months. Originally trapped on Crete,

he lived there until conditions became too difficult. Some Greek fishermen had taken him to the mainland. But there things were not much better.

He no longer wondered what a thick, juicy steak would taste like. Or some soft white bread and yellow butter—or just a glass of milk. Sometimes he recalled how much he'd hated milk as a boy. He'd give twenty dollars for three ounces of it right now . . . if he had the twenty.

Steve kept shuffling toward the waterfront. He passed Italian troops of the regular army, sullen, vicious individuals who wanted nothing more than to return to their families. And there were Hun soldiers, arrogant, swaggering and brutal.

He accidentally bumped into one of these Germans. The man pushed him aside and muttered something about contamination. But Steve was used to being shoved around. So were all Greeks. . . . But while they said nothing and did nothing, every Greek patriot was secretly planning for the day of retribution when the tyrants who had violated their beloved land would be made to pay for their crimes. . . .

THE waterfront wasn't particularly well guarded. Neither the Huns nor the Italians feared much from the men left in this city. Those who hadn't fled to the mountains were sick or crippled by frozen feet during their titanic struggle against the Italians before Germany invaded Greek soil.

A few sentries had glanced at Steve but no more than they would at any other helpless beggar.

Something detached itself from the wall of a building and moved forward. Moved like a man whose feet are too heavy to lift off the ground. It was a spectacle in rags, long hair and an unshaven face. Words came from the lips. Words that were more of a croak.

As the figure drew closer, Steve saw the man's distorted features and the idiotic expression. The eyes were vacant, staring things.

"Alms," the beggar murmured. "Alms—or at least a cigarette?"

Steve started to pick up speed, but a grimy hand clutched at his sleeve as the beggar pleaded for a cigarette. With a shrug, Steve took a half-smoked butt from his pocket. The beggar snatched it from him and sidled closer for a light.

Then it was that the American hastily opened his coat and handed the beggar a heavy curved bit of metal with Italian printing on it. The beggar transferred this to his own greasy person, puffed furiously on the cigarette as Steve continued on his way.

The ragged derelict then hobbled over toward the dock where a large German cargo ship was being made ready. He sidled up to the gangplank and suddenly he was aboard the ship before sentries knew anything about it. He dragged himself along the deck, crying for alms or a cigarette.

There was a pile of tarpaulin over near the rail. He headed for that, sat down cross-legged and extended his palm in supplication. But the man's small red-rimmed eyes were wary.

When no one was looking he quickly took out the curved piece of metal and worked it under the tarpaulin. He had completed his task when a German naval officer, resplendent in whites, saw him and came over. He gave the beggar a vicious kick and yelled for his men.

Four sailors and a sentry from the dock hurried over.

"Throw this bit of garbage into the sea," the officer snarled. "He is fouling my ship with his presence. Throw him overboard, do you hear me? Put a bullet in him too, if you like."

The sentry came to attention.

"May I speak, *Herr Leutnant*?" he said. "This man is harmless. Long before we came, he was like this. An idiot, sir. Sometimes he goes into the cafes and the officers like to hear him sing. He sounds like a duck."

"Then let's see if he can swim like one," the lieutenant growled. "Throw him overboard. Idiot, is he? You know our *Feuhrer's* attitude toward idiots. They are to be destroyed."

"*Ja, Herr Leutnant.*" The sailors brushed the sentry aside, grabbed the beggar and like a sack of beans they tossed him overboard into the water.

HE SEEMED to sink like a stone, yet beneath the water the man swam with long, easy strokes until he was under the pier. He came up next a piling and rested a few moments. There was a grin on his twisted lips.

The beggar finally got back on land and found a safe place to dry off in the sun. It was an ideal spot. As he lay there he could watch the cargo ship slowly pulling away from the dock. She headed into the bay of Salonika. When she was well out into the harbor, a fishing craft sailed directly in front of her bows and continued on its way under a good breeze.

The German cargo ship sailed smoothly along up to a certain point. Then there was a terrific explosion. Debris was thrown hundreds of feet into the air. Flames swept the forward part of the vessel. Men leaped into the sea. The ship began to list immediately, while countless naval craft rushed to her aid.

An hour passed. The fire aboard that ship was out, but she was gutted, her cargo destroyed beyond any hope of salvage and she blocked the harbor beautifully. The beggar smiled with grim satisfaction. It was all even better than he had hoped.

Some of the German auxiliary craft had returned to shore and excited officers now hurried along the dock. The beggar was there mingling with the crowd. Nobody paid any attention to him.

He sidled up to a group of German Naval officers and begged for alms. They shooed him off and as he limped slowly away he was able to overhear their conversation.

One of them said, "I saw it with my own eyes. There can be no mistake. A mine sunk our ship. Ruined that precious cargo and . . . It was an Italian mine. The dumb animals must have planted one in the middle of what was supposed to be a cleared lane."

"Ja," another declared venomously, "must we also fight our allies? We would be better off without them!"

"Quiet!" one of the men whispered. "Three Italian army officers are coming this way." Then he said quickly, "It's time they learned what

we really think of them. How about it? They need a lesson and it will do them good."

The others nodded and as the Italians saluted, the Germans pounced. The free-for-all lasted ten minutes and when it was over, one German officer lay dead with a dagger protruding from his throat. One Italian crawled away to nurse his wounds while the other two broke and ran for it, hotly pursued by the Germans.

This was fine, thought the beggar—but it was just the beginning. In the end it would be the Greeks who would chase both Germans and Italians if this dissension grew worse.

He limped off and continued on his way. After a while he reached his destination—a littered alley in a very poor part of the town. He pushed back the door to a dilapidated little shed.

Steve Hale arose from a chair to greet him. The beggar took off his coat, stretched both hands high and exercised his legs. Oddly enough, they were good, healthy legs.

"It worked!" he said in English. "Great Caesar's ghost, how it worked! Everything went off like clockwork. Our fishing boat dropped the mine right in the path of the ship and—she's done for."

"Good," Steve said, "but did you plant that piece of Italian mine I gave you? Did they find it? That's the important part?"

"Did they!" the beggar grinned. "They're calling the Italians all kinds of filthy names. And a group of German officers started a nice brawl with them. One thing about these Italians, they can use a knife when cornered . . .

"And now let's forget our success for a moment and be properly introduced. I am Nick Dimitrous."

Steve put out his hand. "Steve Hale is my name. I was ordered to contact you and that wasn't hard. Gosh, that's some rig you wear and your face—is that a disguise?"

NICK laughed bitterly.

"Disguise?" he repeated as they both sat down. "You might call it that, but I can't remove it. Believe

it or not, Steve, I wasn't a bad looking chap. I fought the Italians, and we did a good job of it too until the Boche came. That was too much. I fled, hiked through snow for weeks and then ran into a German patrol."

"I can guess the rest," Steve said slowly.

"Perhaps, but let me tell you. Then you will see why I can hate so much. They took me to an isolated camp. First they broke my hands. Then they used a rifle butt on my face until it was unrecognizable. After that, they got tired of playing and heaved me off a bank to die in a snow drift.

"But those dirty Boche don't know Greeks very well, Steve. I crawled away and some fishermen found me. They nursed me back to health, but when I finally looked at myself, only I knew it was the same person."

"I'm sorry," Steve said.

"Don't be," Nick shrugged. "I'm lucky. Most of those who fought with me froze to death. I returned here, but no one recognized me. You see—I used to be an actor. A singer. But when they were batting me around in the concentration camp, my throat took a beating too. I can't sing any more. What sound I can manage is so ludicrous that it amuses people.

"And so I go about, acting like an idiotic beggar—singing for those rotten Huns in the cafes they have taken over. They throw me coins . . . But I get information that way, and it is worth the humiliation."

Steve fumbled in his pocket for cigarettes and offered one to Nick. The brave Greek patriot was silent for a moment as he watched the slow, curling smoke.

"How is everything on Athos?" he asked.

"Fine." Steve lit a cigarette himself. "Food enough, but what we're really after is munitions. You should see the supply in the labyrinths beneath the monasteries. We're getting there, Nick."

"Why," Nick asked, "is it so essential to store up munitions there? Our army fights in the hills, joins with the Yugoslavs and makes life miserable for our enemies. But here, along

the coast, little is done to oppose them."

Steve said, "We're looking into the future, Nick. There'll be more than a second Allied front started—and soon, too. One of them may be concentrated here. Our men in the hills will need guns, grenades, bullets. We're piling them up."

"So," Nick nodded, "I'm beginning to see just how important this is. Tell me," he said. "You're an American. I know your country is on my side, but why do you remain here and starve?"

"You stop worrying about your stomach when there's a war to be won, Nick. Sure I'm an American. I fought with the British. That's how I got here. My plane was shot to blazes on Crete and I had a bullet through my side. But I'm staying here now until we can give it back to them.

"This war is being fought all over the globe. Anywhere I go I would try to do what I could, but I have a particular debt to pay right here. And I have seen what the enemy has done to your beautiful country."

"Good for you." Nick got up. "Well," he said, "I've got to move. Things may happen fast. And Steve, we're a pretty good team. I know Yanks—I spent eight years in the United States. Suppose we stick—if you can stand my looks."

Steve thrust out his hand. "You're wearing a medal of honor, Nick. Now beat it and find out if our plans are developing. Let me know because I must hurry back to Athos."

"The sacred mountain," Nick said softly. "What a place it is! On a peninsula, surrounded on two sides by water. Inaccessible from the land side unless a man wants to climb those sheer cliffs. Some day it will be a bastion and we'll blow these Huns and Fascist Italians back where they belong. Cheerio, my friend. See you soon."

THE two men parted company after planning to meet again at a certain time.

Steve headed for the Cafe Salonika. This was formerly a very exclusive

meeting place for the upper classes of society and the diplomatic world. It was now taken over by the Nazis who used it solely for their own nefarious purpose. There was a sign prominently displayed prohibiting even Italians from entering.

When Steve arrived he found the place a *mêlée* of smashed windows and broken furniture. The fight was still raging between the Germans and those Italians who dared to stand up to them.

An Italian officer lay bleeding out on the street. Steve went up to him.

"You are hurt," he said. "Come . . . this way. You will be safe until the blood stops."

The lieutenant was in no position to decline help. Steve helped him to a sheltered spot and did his best to stop the bleeding. The lieutenant gave him a peculiar look.

"Why are you—a Greek—helping me?"

Steve shrugged. "Why not? I agree, you are my enemy, but you are not a Nazi. A foul Hun. They are not even content to beat us Greeks. They have to fight their own Allies!"

"*Si, si,*" the lieutenant moaned. "This is the finish though. You have been kind to me. I will give you some advice. Get out of here. Go away—anywhere. Go quickly."

"That is odd advice," Steve said. "Why do you tell me this?"

"Never mind. Just go. Or wait . . . I will tell you. The Germans claim our Navy planted a mine so that their cargo ship was blown up. The filthy liars! And now they say we cannot stay here. Our own superiors agree. There is always much trouble so—we are leaving tonight. Every Italian soldier is going to some other post."

"But how does that concern me?" Steve asked.

"You fool. Can't you realize the Germans must always have someone to fight and when we are gone, who is left but you Greeks?"

"Ah, yes," Steve said. "How do you feel now, *Signor* Lieutenant? Better, I hope."

"I feel well enough." Suddenly he stood up, his body rigid, hate gleam-

ing from his eyes. "Also I talk too much. I don't know but that I should kill you."

"Do you feel quite strong enough to kill me?" Steve asked.

"Of course I do. Don't tempt me, you filthy scum. It was the wine that loosened my tongue. You Greeks are no better than the Germans. I remember what happened in those snow-covered mountain passes."

"I'm waiting for you to begin," Steve said. "To kill me, I mean. You see, I also remember what you beasts did to some of the towns you conquered. To some of the people. The only difference between you and the Huns is that you advance backwards much better. Come, Lieutenant, reach for your gun."

The Italian gaped as he saw the change that had come over this young man. He seemed taller, tensely alert and very strong. With a savage oath the lieutenant dug for his pistol, and Steve slugged him. He bent over the man, took his gun away and then sat down.

"Now let me see," Steve said. "One of us talked about killing the other. I could spare your life, Lieutenant, for a consideration. Otherwise—you might say your prayers."

"What . . . do you want to know?"

"Only when the Italian troops leave, how many trains will be sent and if your munitions supplies travel on a special train. I ask little enough in return for your life. How about it?"

The lieutenant sat up, nursing his jaw.

"You are very clever," he said. "You speak Italian like a native. Greek, too. Yet I have the impression that you are British. Go ahead and shoot."

STEVE brought the gun on a level with the man's chest. "I'm an American," he said slowly. "And I'm not soft as you may think. Here it comes."

The lieutenant's bluff had carried him so far and no further. He gave a wail and sank back, one hand extended.

"No . . . I will talk! Don't shoot! We entrain at eight tonight. We go

north and our arsenal follows on a second train. I have told you. Don't kill me. Please, *Signor*. . . ."

Without answer Steve suddenly turned on his heel and started to walk off. The Italian opened his tunic, withdrew a shiny object and with lightninglike swiftness plunged after the retreating American.

But Steve was ready for this attempted "stab-in-the-back." He swung about in time to ward off that deadly knife thrust and the two men closed in mortal combat.

Both men knew there could be no half way to this struggle. Only one man would be alive when it was over. The Italian fought like a madman. Steve pinned the man's hand in a pain-racking grip and the knife dropped free. Both men tumbled to the ground. The Italian started to scream for help. Steve's hands went to his throat to stifle the yell. He tightened and held on . . .

It was time for Steve to meet Nick Dimitrous. He hurried along the street. But not too fast lest he arouse suspicion.

When he arrived at the little shed, Nick was already there. The Greek looked up with a grin.

Steve said, "I had a little trouble, but got my information. Trainloads of Italian troops leave at eight tonight. The munitions train follows."

"Excellent," Nick said. "It jibes exactly with my own information. I had some trouble too. Here," he held out a small package, "German cigarettes. Not much good but passable. The German who donated them won't smoke again . . . unless it is somewhere in the lower regions."

Steve accepted one, lit it. Then went to a corner of the room, lifted some old rags and dragged out a canvas belt which fitted around his middle. He opened the flaps and lined up a row of odd looking contrivances. They were oblong boxes to each of which was attached a cheap watch.

"These will do the trick," Steve said. "Our job is to place them in various axle bearing boxes of the munitions train. The watches can be set so they'll release the contents of the cans at the precise moment when

the train is in the pass. I figured that two o'clock in the morning seems about right. Set a few of the watches, will you?"

Nick marveled at the mechanism. "A tiny charge of explosive breaks open the cans," he said examining the thing. "An abrasive—emery, I suppose—is released and enters the bearings . . . The train will have to stop soon afterwards and then, my friend—a deluge of patriots. More munitions, guns, food for our forces. We have good leadership, Steve. They know this plan will work."

Steve grinned.

"The Italians and Huns have been ready to fly at one another's throats for months," he said. "We're just pepping them up a bit."

Nick replaced the tiny cans into the canvas waistband. He opened his clothing and strapped the belt around him.

"I think it is better I attend to this," he smiled. "They know me and if I am found near the munitions train, they won't think anything of it. To them I'm just a crazy, harmless old curiosity."

"Go ahead," Steve said. "I'll be somewhere around though just in case things go wrong. Better get rid of the canvas belt too as soon as you have placed the bombs. Good luck, Nick."

They shook on it and Nick hurried out.

WHEN once on the street he assumed his usual snail-like pace. He proceeded straight toward the railroad yards and the munitions train. As yet, few of the cars had been filled and there were not many guards. Those who were on duty knew Nick and paid little attention to him.

He slipped beneath one of the cars, lifted the lid of the axle-bearing box and inserted one of the bombs. He wormed his way forward under the train, repeating this process at strategic places only so that the train would have to stop when the abrasive ground into the bearings. There was enough in each small can to do the job quickly too.

After disposing of the last can,

Nick took off the canvas belt and stuffed it behind some machinery in a freight car. He crawled out and was straightening up when he heard a command to halt.

Nick froze. A three-man patrol was advancing toward him and to make matters worse they were Germans. Nick lost his head and began running.

A rifle cracked. He felt the bullet whine past his ear. Another shot and he stumbled. The wound was slight, but temporarily disabling. Before he could get to his feet, the Nazis were upon him. They yanked him up, a flashlight glared in his face.

"It is the filthy beggar who croaks for the officers," one of the men grunted in disgust. "An idiot, they say."

"Perhaps." Another man seemed doubtful. "I have seen him many times. Always he shuffles along and yet—he ran very well just now! I think we should turn him over to the Gestapo."

Two men seized Nick and propelled him across the railroad yard. He was put into a military police car and whisked to Gestapo headquarters in the old city jail.

Nick kept mumbling unintelligibly, but his brain was working furiously. This was the worst spot he'd ever been in since that time when he was a guest of the German patrol in an isolated mountain region.

A Gestapo captain leaned back in his swivel chair and looked at the old beggar.

"You did well to bring him here," he told the patrol, "but I doubt if he was up to anything. He cannot talk much, but we shall see if we can loosen his tongue. Schmidt—take him into the next room. See if he can talk."

Schmidt, a non-commissioned officer, grabbed Nick by one arm and started to pilot him toward a door. Suddenly he stopped, swung the prisoner around and tilted his head back.

"I know this man, Captain," he said excitedly. "Ja—I remember him well. We captured him in the mountains a year ago. He was a Greek infantry major!"

The captain jumped up. He stepped closer to Nick and slapped him across the face.

"Is that the truth?" he demanded. "You are a spy. Ja—that is it." Then as slow realization dawned, "A spy. No wonder you keep dragging yourself into cafes reserved for officers. *Ach!* It is good we captured you and not the accursed Italians. What are you after?"

Nick still pretended imbecility. It wouldn't prevent his being tortured by the Gestapo or his eventual execution if that was what they wanted but it would give him a chance to stall for a while.

They dragged him into the next room.

FOR an hour Nick took punches, blows and punishment that almost equaled the treatment he received in that mountain camp. But there was no limit to the man's perseverance and he stubbornly maintained the incoherent gibberish of the incurable idiot. If only they don't discover the time-bombs! If only Steve is safe!

The Gestapo captain finally tired of his sport. He motioned the others away and Nick slowly collapsed on the floor.

"It is no use," the captain cursed. "Perhaps, Schmidt, you and your men did make an idiot out of him . . . No matter—we shall make an example of him. We shall hang this carrion in the middle of the public square. Send Greek carpenters to erect a gallows." Then he added, as if he relished the thought, "We will let his body dangle there for a few days as an example to all who do not cooperate with the Reich."

Nick, half-conscious, almost wished for death. This was the end, of course, but he'd expected it sooner or later.

One of the men kicked him into a corner and then sat down to mount guard. They weren't even going to bother locking him up. Within an hour, he'd be swinging from that gallows.

Steve had seen them take Nick from the railroad yard. He knew where the car would be headed and he hur-

ried to Gestapo Headquarters, arriving shortly after they'd taken Nick inside. He hung around, worried but unable to do anything as yet.

An hour passed by. He saw soldiers hurry out of the building. Soon after, he saw several Greeks carrying lumber from battered buildings into the public square almost across the street from Gestapo Headquarters.

Steve managed to sidle close and seize one end of a heavy beam. The German guards didn't notice this new addition to the carpentry forces.

In Greek, Steve whispered hoarsely to the man at the other end of the beam. The man shrugged and replied, also in a whisper.

"They tell us nothing," he said, "but it is a gallows we build. Another execution, I suppose."

"Listen," Steve said quickly, "stall all you can. Make mistakes, drop nails, put the gallows together wrong. Do anything but gain time. The man who is to be executed is one of us! I may be able to save him."

The man nodded but was careful to show no outward sign of surprise.

Steve extricated himself from the procession without being detected. He had an idea—a wild, impossible idea—and yet, it might work.

He went to the spot where he'd battled with the Italian lieutenant. The corpse was still there. He removed the man's tunic, trousers and hat. Then with the dead man's clothes over his arm, he began walking swiftly toward a certain hotel which the Italians had commandeered.

Guards stopped him at the door. But when Steve explained in poor Italian what he wanted they sent him through. He was taken to a room occupied by an Italian colonel.

Steve laid the dead lieutenant's garments on the back of a chair.

"Where did you get those?" the colonel asked in Greek.

"They were thrown at me, excellency," Steve explained. "As I passed the jail, a window opened and these clothes were flung out. Naturally I picked them up, saw they were Italian and decided to bring them here. A good uniform, excellency. Good ma-

terial. Too valuable to throw away."

THE colonel examined the clothes, looked in the pockets. Angrily he turned to his aide.

This is the uniform of Lieutenant Barrini," he said in Italian. "He has been missing for some time. I was told he took part in a fight with Germans at the Cafe Salonika."

"Si," the aide replied. "I know what you mean. The Gestapo has decided to go the limit. You recall, Colonel, that during a street fight this afternoon, one of our officers killed a German. By necessity, of course. Now the Germans have taken Lieutenant Barrini prisoner."

The colonel paced the floor nervously.

"They would not dare do anything to him! After all, we fight on the same side."

"May I remind you, Colonel," the aide put in, "that the Germans are capable of anything. I think we should investigate."

"Yes—yes, of course. Go to the Gestapo Headquarters and make inquiries. Be firm about it—but diplomatic, too. Tell them I will not permit one of my men to be harmed. Hurry!"

The aide vanished.

During all this conversation Steve stood in one corner of the room, head respectfully bowed, but not missing a single word of what was being said.

The colonel now paced up and down muttering nervously to himself. He suddenly became aware of Steve and turned impatiently.

"That is all," he said irritably. "You will keep quiet about finding the uniform. It was, perhaps, just a mistake or a joke, do you understand? Here—take this silver and buy yourself some food. Get out!"

Steve would have liked to stay there until the aide returned, but he could do nothing but obey orders. He could not let the colonel know that he had understood everything as it would certainly make the Italian suspicious. He made his exit as slowly as he dared.

As he was walking through the lobby and wondering what to do next,

the colonel's aide rushed past him and bounded up the stairs. Steve turned and followed and without being seen by the colonel was in time to overhear the aide make his report.

"A gallows, *signor*. For Lieutenant Barrini, no doubt. No one knows who is to be hung, but it will be Barrini." The Italian was very excited. "I know what has happened. The Germans stripped him of his uniform, put on some old rags and will hang him as a spy—a Greek. The gallows are almost completed. We must do something at once."

Steve slipped away, left the hotel and padded his way toward the public square. He shuddered at the sight of the gallows. One man was astride the crossbeam tying a rope. Gestapo men hovered about.

In the darkness of an alley Steve paused to offer a prayer for success. He could do nothing more for Nick. Now either the animosity between the Italians and the Germans, Hun stolidness or Italian hot temper would decide the great soldier's fate.

Fifteen minutes later, a squad of Gestapo police marched out of the city jail and took up positions around the gallows. Steve saw Italian troops slowly edge forward. Nick was dragged out. He kept his head low and stumbled between the guards.

Then Steve raised his voice and shouted in Italian:

"They cannot do this thing. Stop them!"

The Italians surged forward. Gestapo men, surprised for a moment, gave vent to their perpetual rage against these allies. A bloody fight started. Steve charged into the mass of fighting men. He saw a Gestapo sergeant drop his pistol flying into the gutter.

STEVE scooped up the weapon and pushed his way toward Nick who was being held by two of the guards. In the confusion and semi-darkness no one could tell who had fired the shot. One of the guards doubled up and fell. The other hesitated a moment, let go of Nick and fled for his life.

"Follow me," Steve whispered into
(Continued on page 75)



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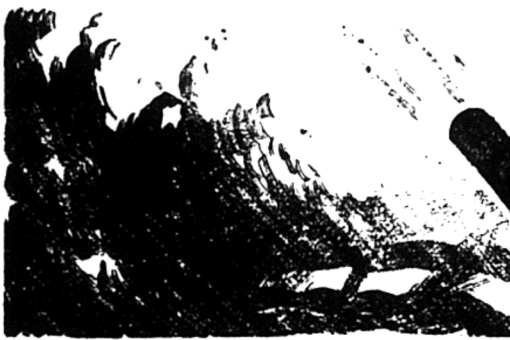
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UNDERGROUND GUNS

(Continued from page 73)

Nick's ear. "There is a military car beside the jail."

Nick didn't speak until they were riding furiously across the rutted, mountainous road. Then he gripped the American's hand.

"My thanks, Steve," he said. His voice was hoarse with emotion. "A man never had a better ally than you—and all Americans." Then he said, "And now, where are we going?"

"To a certain mountain pass to watch some fireworks!"

Two hours later they saw the first troop train whiz by, far below in the ravine. Another followed and then the slower munitions train chugged along. It began to slow up and finally it stopped altogether.

Guards poured out, took up positions. But they heard and saw nothing. The quiet and solitude of the ravine hardly looked dangerous.

Suddenly a great shout rang out followed by the cracks of many rifles. Snipers with telescopic-sighted rifles picked off the guards, and a horde of Greek patriots swooped down on the train. Wagons and trucks were brought up and loaded with supplies from the munitions train. Finally, the

[Turn Page]

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train was set afire and as quietly as they came, the Patriot Army disappeared.

Steve and Nick exchanged meaning glances.

Nick said, "As I told you before, we're a good team, my friend. We should continue to work together. There is so much to be done."

"It's a deal," Steve replied. "Of course, we can't go back to that city. We'd be spotted instantly, but there are other cities, towns and villages. Other Gestapo units, regular German army units and Italian corps to harry."

"All of us are doing a good job here, Nick. We keep enemy divisions busy, prevent them from going to other fronts and if our contribution to victory is no more than that—it will be appreciated . . . Come on—we've got work to do!"

The munitions train still smoldered as the two men left the scene. It was a picture symbolic of what the Underground hoped to accomplish not only in Greece but all over conquered Europe—to leave hate and tyranny in smoldering ruins everywhere.

Steve Hale and Nick Dimitrous walked silently and determinedly into the night.

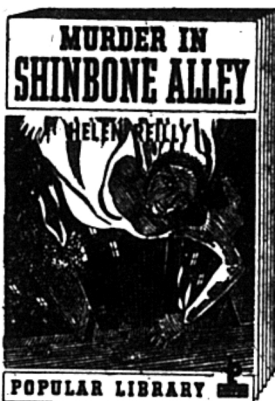
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MYSTERY-SCOPES

(Continued from page 6)

pirate, Captain Kidd. It was around Atlantic Highlands that Kidd had his headquarters at one time. In fact, buried treasure has been found in that vicinity.

Dr. Grevel, retired, lived alone except for a skeleton which he kept sitting in the living room.

Neighbors claimed that the doctor would talk to the skeleton as though the thing were alive. Naturally, folks thought the doctor a bit queer, although he was very well liked.

One morning a new gardener, who had been sent by an employment agency in answer to the doctor's request for a hired man, called for an interview. The doctor, always meticulous about appointments, due to his military background, said:

"I thought you were to come last night. That is what the agency told me."

"I did, sir," smiled the gardener, "but when I looked through the window into your living room, I decided not to bother you till morning."

"Why?" snapped the doctor.

"Because I thought you were about to go to the costume ball they were holding in the village."

"What made you think that?" asked the doctor, interested.

"Why, the man sitting near you was dressed like a pirate!"

The doctor's face lit up.

"So you can see it too? You must be psychic like I am."

A year later, the doctor died, and in accordance with his instructions, the skeleton was

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buried beside him in the family plot. Many people still wonder whether it could have been the skeleton of Captain Kidd.

Psychic Warnings

GEORGE A. KRESTON, a successful lawyer, recently won a case for a simple-minded client. The lawyer used as a defense a passage from the Bible which reads: "And he heard a voice, saying . . ."

It seemed that the defendant had stolen groceries from a wagon to feed a hungry old woman neighbor. He claimed a "voice" had told him to do it to save the old woman's life. Thus, due to the clever defense on the part of the lawyer, the defendant was placed on probation rather than imprisoned.

That evening, at a social gathering at which the lawyer was present, friends of the lawyer were discussing the case. One sophisticated young lady said to the lawyer:

"George, you are clever. What an imagination you have. You can think up the best alibi for a client. But don't you realize that people who hear voices are insane?"

Then she turned to a prominent psychiatrist who happened to be sitting next to her, and added:

"Am I not right, doctor?"

The tactful physician smiled and answered:

"I wouldn't call it insanity. That is such an ugly word. Let us call it 'a ringing in the ears' which under certain conditions might sound like a voice."

The lawyer's eyes sparkled. Then he looked up.

"Thanks, doc," he said. "That's a big relief. Often I have thought I was a bit touched myself—but honestly, a voice out of nowhere saved my life in the first World War in France. It told me to seek shelter. Had I not obeyed, I would have been blown to bits a minute later by a shell landing in that spot."

The Hand of the Fiend

MISS CHARLOTTE ROOKS, an American actress, reveals that for years, in certain emergencies, she has heard her dead mother's voice like a strange whisper in the dark. As a child, she remembers, her mother always soothed her fears in that same type of whisper.

Some years ago, Miss Rooks was in England, and one afternoon she decided to visit a quaint country church near Winchester. She was warned that several girls in that vicinity had been molested of late by an unknown assailant. But she wasn't afraid.

The church was empty. She stood in reverence at the rear of the aisle, when suddenly she felt a heavy hand on her shoulder. She

[Turn page]



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was just about to scream when she heard her mother's voice. It whispered:

"Pat the hand."

She summoned all her courage and, being an actress, she turned gently, with a forced smile. She saw a brute of a man whose fiendish sneer turned to a moronic grin. Still patting his hand, she said:

"I'm sorry—are you in trouble?"

Then she saw the brute become a weeping child. He dropped to his knees and begged her forgiveness. She told him to remain and pray awhile—everything would be all right.

Weak from fright she was just able to get out of that lonely church and reach the authorities. The man was arrested and confessed his previous assaults. He said he had intended to strangle Miss Rooks, but the pat of her hand had subdued him, because, as he put it, "she wasn't afraid of me."

The Gypsy Password

SOME years ago, Alexander, a 19-year-old gypsy, while walking along a wood-lane in the highest mountain of Transylvania, was challenged by a native with a gun. This was dangerous territory for anyone who didn't belong to one of the mountain clans.

Alexander uttered one word in reply to the challenge. The word was:

"Mahayan."

The astounded woodsman hearing this word of distress, spoken only in a great emergency, took the lad to Madame Borodain, a wealthy widow and head of the most powerful mountain clan.

When questioned as to how he, a stranger, had obtained the secret password, he revealed that when his mother, a gypsy queen in Roumania had died, the members of the band informed him he wasn't the Queen's son but

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one adopted in infancy. They gave him money and ordered him to leave and never return under danger of death. As he departed, a gypsy friend had whispered:

"Go to the highest mountain. The password is 'Mahayan'."

The widow Borodain looked at him keenly. She studied him for several moments undecided what to do. Finally she ordered an old suit of clothes, a hat and a false moustache. Alexander put them on as instructed and turned to the people behind him. As they looked at him they exclaimed in unison:

"Papa Borodain!"

The widow smiled, and, pleased by the resemblance to her dead husband, she acclaimed Alexander as her own son stolen in infancy. She embraced him as the people cheered, then knelt in thanksgiving. Their prayers had been answered.

Today, Alexander, a prominent merchant in America, reveals that the password was not given to him by a gypsy friend as he had first reported—but by a deep voice out of nowhere when he had prayed for hours at a mountain shrine, praying that he would learn his true identity after being driven from the only home he had ever known.

He believes it was his dead father's voice.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Dear Chakra: I have been told that Beekman Hill, New York, where so many strangulation murders have taken place, is haunted. Is this true and why?—*Fred Kellogg.*

Dear Mr. Kellogg: Some believe it is due to the fact that Nathan Hale was tried and convicted at the old Beekman Estate and later hanged on that hill.

Dear Chakra: What is meant by a mental medium?—*Halsey Wicks.*

Dear Mr. Wicks: A medium who doesn't have to go into a trance in order to hear voices or see spirits, but can make contact in the light and while conscious.

Dear Chakra: I heard a psychic scientist speak of the "frequency vibration of ectoplasm." What would that be—in comparison with other vibrations?—*George Sylvester.*

Dear Mr. Sylvester: It is supposed to be about the 80th octave of vibratory energy, higher than x-ray, which is the 65th octave.

Dear Chakra: Is voodoo always a curse?—*Jerry Malimer.*

Dear Mr. Malimer: No—voodoo witch doctors have been known to offer blessings as well as maledictions.

CHAKRA.

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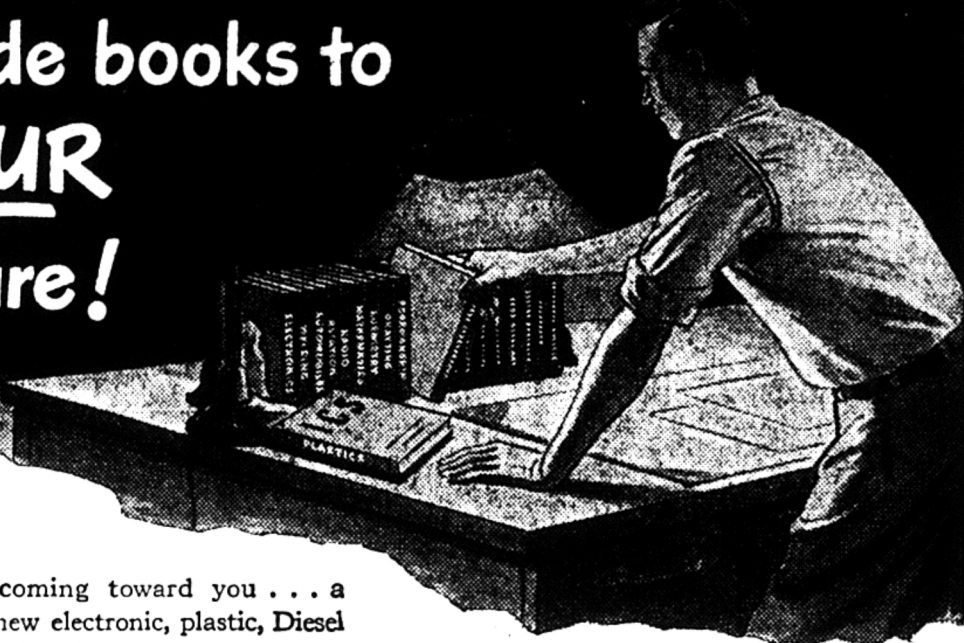
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastics | <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Brake | <input type="checkbox"/> Car Inspector | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost Accounting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pulp and Paper Making | <input type="checkbox"/> Gas Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> Locomotive Engineer | | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Tax |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil, Architectural and Structural Engin'g Schools | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Schools | <input type="checkbox"/> Locomotive Fireman | | <input type="checkbox"/> First Year College |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Aeronautical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Railroad Section Foreman | | <input type="checkbox"/> Foremanship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Airplane Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Engineering Schools | | <input type="checkbox"/> High School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge and Building Foreman | <input type="checkbox"/> Flight Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Boilermaking | | <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Mathematics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Foundry Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Combustion Engineering | | <input type="checkbox"/> Illustrating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Estimating | <input type="checkbox"/> Heat Treatment of Metals | <input type="checkbox"/> Engine Running | | <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Engines | | <input type="checkbox"/> Post Office Clerk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contracting and Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Electric | | <input type="checkbox"/> Railway Postal Clerk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highway Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Engines | | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lumber Dealer | <input type="checkbox"/> Mold-Loft Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Schools | | <input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Pattermaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton Manufacturing | | <input type="checkbox"/> Stenography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Shop Blueprints | <input type="checkbox"/> Rayon Weaving | | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying and Mapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet Metal Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Designing | | <input type="checkbox"/> Language Schools |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet Metal Worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Woolen Manufacturing | | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish |
| | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> French |
| | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Good English |

Name.....Age.....Home Address.....

City.....State.....Present Position.....Working Hours.....

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ATTENTION! Junior G-Men Secret Code Maker Now Released

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R-E-C-E-I-V-E-S A-L-L
M-E-S-S-A-G-E-S I-N
S-E-C-R-E-T C-O-D-E**

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SEND NO MONEY

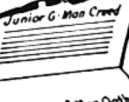
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The first one starting each new G-Man club can make money of his own... become Club leader automatically. Girls organize Junior G-Man GUARDS... (Girls-United Association Reserves for Duty and Service). Check coupon now to get all extra information FREE. YOU WILL ENJOY MANY OF THE GREATEST THRILLS OF YOUR LIFETIME with this Junior G-Man Code-Maker. Send for it today. **ACCEPT "Spy Code Secrets" FREE** to introduce, (while they last). Sensational! If you order now.

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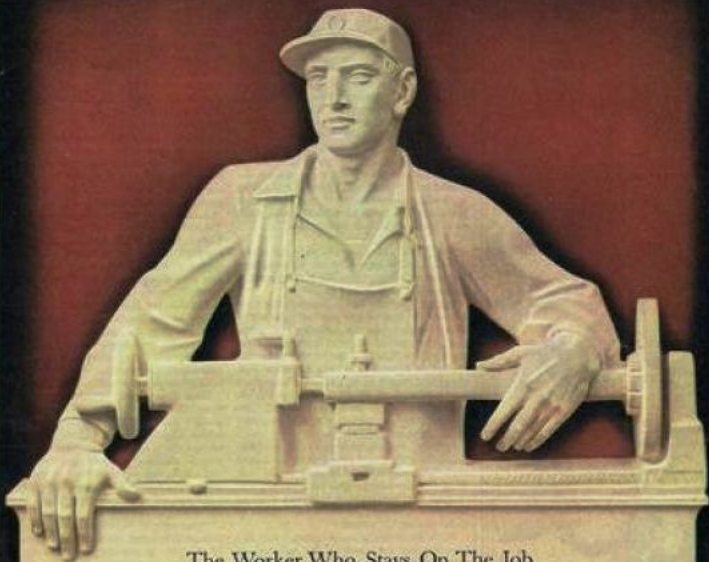
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ADDRESS _____

CITY, TOWN _____ STATE _____

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He knows that minutes count.
Each one is precious to himself —
But precious more
To those who fight, and bleed, and die.

Minutes in which another turning
of the wheel...
Another weapon fashioned...
Another shell made ready for its task...

Can tip the balance of some far-off battle
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Where it is only hoped for now.

He stays. Day upon day, he stays
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With purpose clear... and with sense
of honored duty well performed.
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