

## HOW WOULD YOU PLAY IT?

North

♠ Q-10-2  
♥ 9-2  
♦ A-J-9-3-2  
♣ K-7-3

East

♠ 8-6-4  
♥ J-10-4  
♦ K-8-4  
♣ Q-10-8-4

West

♠ A-9-3  
♥ Q-8-7-6-5  
♦ 7-5  
♣ J-6-5

South

♠ K-J-7-5  
♥ A-K-3  
♦ Q-10-6  
♣ A-9-2

By  
**MILTON C. WORK**  
Author of  
*Auction Bridge Complete*

THE above Auction Bridge hand was given in last week's Collier's; the description follows:

South Opened with a No Trump, and West, North and East passed. It is obvious that these declarations are the only ones which experts would consider; but the inexpert might be in doubt as to whether West should risk a bid of two Hearts "to get South out of the No Trump" or, with West passing, whether North should bid two Diamonds "to show his suit." I will refer briefly to both these questions.

A player sitting over an initial No Trump at a love score should not bid a suit unless holding a hand within two tricks of game; and should not double informatively unless holding at least five high cards that probably will take tricks.

With no sound authority endorsing it, an idea has spread all over the country that a dealer's No Trump is informative and must be taken out by his partner if Second Hand passes.

Dealer's No Trump should not be taken out at a love score unless Third Hand has one of five types of holding:

- A two-suiter.
- A five-card or longer Major with strength.
- A seven-card or longer Major with weakness.
- A five-card or longer Minor (better bid when longer) without a trick in hand.
- A six-card or longer Minor with unusual strength; bid three.

## The Play

WEST leads the Six of Hearts, and Declarer can see no reason for ducking the first trick. If West led a four-card suit, game is easy for Declarer (all he could lose would be one Spade, one Diamond and two Hearts), but it probably is a five-card suit; if so, East has three Hearts and it is advisable for South to keep command until the third round.

Declarer, looking over the field of action, can see that he is sure to take two Heart tricks, two Club tricks and four or five Diamond tricks, depending upon the location of the adverse King of Diamonds. He could take three Spade tricks, but he must lose to the Ace of Spades, and he may lose to the King of Diamonds. After he loses his first trick, the adversaries will establish their Hearts; and should he lose a second trick before making game, they will save game if that second trick be won by West, if the original lead has been from at least five Hearts.

The thoughtless—but perhaps natural—play for South would be to try the Diamond finesse after winning the first trick; leading the Queen from the

Closed Hand and playing small from Dummy.

Whether the finesse were successful or not, this would establish Declarer's longest suit; but if the King of Diamonds be held by East, the finesse will lose and East will continue the Hearts. South, after ducking the second round of Hearts and winning the third, could take only a total of eight tricks (one short of game) without a Spade, so a Spade would have to be led, and, if the Ace of Spades be in the West hand (where it is in this case), the adversaries would save game with West's remaining two long Hearts. Thus it is demonstrated that the finesse at trick 2 will not make game if the King of Diamonds be held by East and the Ace of Spades by West.

But with the great strength of his combined hands, Declarer holds the key to the situation and can make game even if "everything goes dead wrong;" the key play is a Spade lead to trick 2. If West wins that trick with the Ace of Spades, her reentry to make her Hearts is gone; if she play small, Declarer will win one Spade trick and have enough for game even if the Diamond finesse should fail.

Should Dummy (North) win the first Spade trick, Declarer would put the Closed Hand in with a Club for the Diamond finesse, which then could be taken with perfect safety. If it lost, Declarer would make two Hearts, four Diamonds, two Clubs and one Spade; if it won, a Small Slam. Should West or East play the Ace on the first Spade trick, game will be easy for Declarer if he be careful to hold up his second Heart stopper until the third round of that suit. Then, without an entry in the West hand or a Heart in the East hand, West's long Hearts are "sewed up" and the loss of the Diamond finesse would mean no more than the loss of that one trick.

Next week's hand is given below; make up your mind how you would bid and play it before you read next week's description.

North		East	
S. J-10-8-4-2	D. J-9-7-6-4	S. K-6-5-3	H. J-10-7-6-3-2
H. 4	C. A-4	D. 5	C. 7-5
West		South	
S. Q-9	H. K-Q-9-8	S. A-7	D. K-3-2
D. A-Q-10-8	C. Q-J-10	H. A-5	C. K-9-8-6-3-2

## The Flycatcher

Continued from page 15

champion and he got the decision."

That fat man smiled, thinking wistfully of the old, great days when he had made them all miss and miss; when he had made monkeys of them all; when he had weighed a hundred and twenty pounds and made them all flounder—even the grave, deadly Gans.

"Now," he said to the boy, "I get two dollars for drawing customers into a saloon—catching flies."

"The paper told about that too," the boy said. "It told about how you were so quick you could catch flies on the wing. And I tried it, and after a while I could do it too."

"You're the only one I ever saw that could," the fat man said. "I've been doing it for thirty years, and you're the only one I ever saw that could do it besides me."

HE LOOKED at the boy thoughtfully. He hesitated. He had dreamed many times of finding a boy like that and teaching him to box—of living again the old, great days.

"Ever do any fighting?" he asked.

"Some," the boy said.

"Al," the fat man said, "you don't know what it means. You don't know how much you got to learn. You don't know how monotonous it is—training and learning. You're just a kid."

"I'm twenty years old," the boy said, "and I've got to have five thousand dollars cash to get that farm and—that's all there is to it."

"Why a farm?" the fat man asked.

"What do you want with a farm?"

"I'm a farmer," the boy answered. "And that farm has always been in my family."

The fat man smiled. "You're sure there isn't a girl in it?"

"What if there is?" the boy asked.

The fat man shook his head. "Fighting and women don't mix," he said.

The boy shook his head impatiently. "I'm going to marry this girl and be a farmer, but I got to have five thousand dollars first."

The fat man paid the check and gave the waiter a quarter, which left him with a nickel to jingle against two pennies in his pocket.

"I've got to go back to the saloon now," he said. "and catch some more flies. But you're on. You're on and we'll go fifty-fifty. I've got a room in a basement down the street. Half of it is yours. It doesn't cost me anything. I did a woman a favor once, and now she gives me a room."

That was the way the fat man found the boy who made himself known the following winter to astonished fight reporters and to astonished preliminary boys as Farmer Joe Hawley.

Joe could box. The reporters loved to see him work, and the preliminary boys hated him because they could not hit him. The crowds at places like the Pioneer Athletic Club razed him because he did not hit harder. But he got one decision after another. What else could a referee give a boy who left-jabbed some hooker silly and never gave him a chance to land one solid punch?

Smiling Billy Smith walked the streets of New York with a new swing. He had lost twenty pounds of his superfluous fat in teaching the boy to box and ten years off his age. His smile was still genial, but it was no longer wistful. He had ceased to look back to the old, great days. He was looking forward to the new, great days when Farmer Joe would give the champion a boxing lesson and the fight reporters would say that there never had been such a boxer in the world—except Smiling Billy Smith.

Smiling Billy had only one worry: He had to hold the boy down. He had to tell him after every round to stay away and use that straight left and never take a solid punch and never try for a knockout. The boy was too eager and he didn't know that he couldn't take it, and he didn't know that he couldn't hit. They had their first disagreement about a match with Sailor Rourke.

Smiling Billy thought it was too soon. "You need another year, Al," he explained gently. "The Sailor is a tough one. I'm not sure he couldn't take the champion right now."

The boy shook his head impatiently. "It means seven or eight thousand dollars," he said. "And with my share of that and what I got now I can buy that farm."

In the end Smiling Billy gave in, and they made the match for Labor Day at the ball park.

"You need a two weeks' rest," Smiling Billy said when the papers were all signed.

"I'm going up home for that two weeks—you want to come along?"

The fat man shook his head, but he smiled. "All right," he said. "You go see that farm and that girl and then you come back here and work as you never worked before."

While the boy was gone Smiling Billy collected sparring partners. He got two of the fastest featherweights he could find. Speed was what his boy had. Smiling Billy didn't intend he should rough it with the Sailor. His boy would have to win on points. He would have to win by going that fifteen rounds so fast that the Sailor would never once get a real crack at him.

Smiling Billy got Benny Glantz and a colored boy who was almost as clever as they come, and when the boy came back from upstate they went over to Freddie Welsh's farm in Jersey and worked. Every day the boy boxed six rounds with Benny Glantz and the colored boy. Every day Smiling Billy watched his lightweight beat those two featherweights to the punch; every day he pleaded with them to go faster.

A week before the day of the fight Smiling Billy was almost satisfied. He didn't know he was worried until he lost his temper with the boy about the girl. Three days before the fight the girl came down from upstate. The boy insisted on taking her out to lunch. Smiling Billy almost locked the boy up in his quarters. That is what they would have done in the old days. But he thought better of it. Maybe the kid would think less about the girl if he took her out to lunch than if he couldn't see her. So, reluctantly, he agreed.

The next day the boy announced he was going out to lunch with the girl again.

"No, Al," he said to the boy. "Once is enough. You got to be thinking about this fight."

"I'm sorry, Bill," the boy said, "but she's never been in New York before, and she can only stay a few days, and I've got to show her around."

"If you go out to lunch with that girl before the fight, I won't be in your corner," the fat man said. "You can take it or leave it."

"And if I don't go out with her I won't be in my corner either," the boy said defiantly.

THE boy went to lunch with the girl. He went that day, and he went the next. He didn't get back from lunch until a quarter to three, and he had just time to get down to the weighing in. Smiling Billy was sick about it.

"Come out of it," the boy said when they had got into a taxicab afterward. "I made the weight, didn't I?"

"You made the weight," the fat man admitted.

"Are you still worrying about that girl?" the boy demanded.

"Why wouldn't I be?" Smiling Billy asked.

"What difference does it make?" the boy countered.

Smiling Billy did not answer. He did not know what difference it made. He only had a foreboding about it. He only knew it wasn't the thing to do.

He felt a little better after the first two rounds of the fight. The boy was doing exactly what he had been told to do. He was left-jabbing the Sailor silly. The Sailor would come charging in, both



hands going, willing to take two punches if he could only deliver one. The boy's left would shoot out and snap his head back. The Sailor would pause and shake his head and then, lowering it, he would charge again. And again the boy's left would shoot out—shoot out with the same incredible swiftness of movement with which he would catch a fly on the wing—and snap the Sailor's head back. The Sailor, maddened, would charge like a wild animal, carrying the boy across the ring and swinging with both hands; and the boy would coolly duck and block, taking the blows on his shoulders or on his elbows, when he could not let them go by.

Smiling Billy worked expertly in his corner between the rounds, making the boy relax completely on the stool, making him fill his lungs with air, soothing him, praising him.

IT WENT on that way for three rounds, four rounds, five rounds—until the Sailor's face was a crimson splash and the crowd yelled for him to kill the boy.

"You've got him," Smiling Billy crooned in the boy's ear between rounds. "You've got him. He can't hit you. Stay away from him until his knees begin to wobble. Stay away from him and you get the decision. Stay away, Al. Stay away."

And the boy would go in, and put that flashing left in the Sailor's face, until, carried across the ring by a wild rush, carried across until his back touched the ropes, he would follow the straight lefts with a cross counter to the Sailor's jaw. After the tenth round the Sailor slowed appreciably. He began to clinch. He would clinch and rough the boy, rubbing his heavy unshaven chin in the boy's eyes, pushing his nose up in the break-away, and talking.

Smiling Billy could hear some of the things the Sailor growled in the boy's ear. Quite unpleasant things. He began to razz the boy about the girl. He was trying to get the boy angry. He felt, or his handlers had told him, that his only chance was to get the boy's goat: to get him so mad that he would stand and slug toe to toe instead of boxing.

After the twelfth round the boy was tense. "You aren't letting him get your goat, are you, Al?" Smiling Billy asked.

The boy nodded. He muttered an oath. Smiling Billy soothed him as if he had been a child. "Don't mind what he says, Al. He's only talking because he can't hit you. Don't let him talk you into letting him hit you. Stay away, Al. Stay away and kill him afterward if you feel that way. Stay away and kill him when you've beaten him."

After the fourteenth round the boy was crazy to go in and knock the Sailor out. "Stay away, Al," Smiling Billy repeated. "Stay away. Stay away for one more round. Stay away and he's yours."

The boy went in for the last round and stayed away. Smiling Billy could see the way the boy felt. He could see the boy wince when the Sailor snarled something in his ear about the girl. But the boy stayed away. And as the bell rang the referee grabbed the boy's arm and held it up to announce to the crowd that he was the winner. The crowd booed, unable, as always, to see a rushing, swinging hooker beaten by a boxer. Smiling Billy started across the ring with a bathrobe in his hands. He tripped over the bathrobe and looked down to get it out of the way of his feet, and as he tripped he heard the Sailor roar, "You cream-puff puncher, I'll show you."

The Sailor caught the boy with his hands down. He caught the boy on the jaw with a right hook and sent him crashing down. Smiling Billy turned to pick the boy up. But the boy was already scrambling to his feet. He scrambled to his feet and rushed the Sailor as the Sailor had rushed him. Smiling Billy saw the Sailor's right cocked and opened his mouth to yell, "Look out." The boy's straight left flashed out, and as the Sailor ducked he ducked into a crashing right that sent him down and out.

The next instant Smiling Billy had the boy in his bathrobe. "Al," he said, "if I'd known you could hit like that I'd

have let you take him—I'd have let you take him."

The next day the boxing commission disqualified the Sailor and the boy—set them down for six months. Smiling Billy went into the boy's room at the hotel. The boy was busy dressing.

"Al," he said, "you can't fight again for six months. You shouldn't have let him get your goat. You shouldn't have lost your head."

"Billy," the boy said. "I don't give a whoop about being set down. I'm through with this game. I'm through fighting. I'm going to get married and go back upstate and buy that farm."

"Al," Smiling Billy said, "you don't know—you don't know."

"I don't know what?" the boy snapped.

"You could take the champion with that punch. With a punch like that you could take anybody. You don't know it, but the Sailor was out for eleven minutes after you hit him."

The boy shook his head.

"I'm going to get married and go upstate and buy that farm," the boy said. "And if you want to come along, we'll be glad to have you. Come on with us, Billy."

"You really mean it?" Smiling Billy asked. "Do you really mean you're through?"

The boy turned and smiled at him.

"I really mean it," he said, and Smiling Billy knew that he did mean it.

"But, Al," he protested, "you've got a punch, and you can take it. I didn't know you had a punch. I never had a punch, so I thought you didn't. But you have. The Sailor was out for eleven minutes."

"Billy," the boy said, "I'm through. I'm through with the game. But I'm for you. I'm going out to lunch with the girl. Come on and meet her. Come on and see us get married and go upstate with us and settle down."

Smiling Billy went out and had lunch with the girl and the boy, and he knew the boy meant what he had said. But Smiling Billy wouldn't go upstate. He saw them off on the train. He saw them off at the Grand Central, and then he walked slowly west in Forty-second Street.

It was a hot September afternoon. He stopped several times and pushed back the brand-new straw hat he wore and mopped his face and neck with a silk handkerchief.

At the corner of Seventh Avenue the newsdealer spoke to him with a certain deference. On the other side of the street a tall policeman nodded and said "Hello, Billy," with that same air of deference—the deference that the nicer sort of young people pay to the once great.

Beyond Ninth Avenue the fat man turned through a pair of swinging doors. The place was cool and empty, as saloons often were in those days, toward five o'clock of a warm afternoon, and only one bartender was on duty.

"Hello, Al," Smiling Billy said.

"Hello, Billy," the bartender said. Without waiting for an order he drew a glass of dark beer, scraped the foam off the top, and set it on the bar.

A FLY swooped past Smiling Billy's face. He wondered if he could still do it. He hadn't caught a fly for more than a year. He hadn't thought of catching flies. But now he waited, watching. He waited until a fly came swooping down the bar, and then he tried. With an incredibly quick movement he reached out and caught the fly between his thumb and finger.

"Al," he said to the bartender, "I can still do it." He held up the fly. "I ain't what I once was, but I got something left."

"Yes," the bartender agreed, "you got something left."

"Al," Smiling Billy said, "Al, do you suppose the boss would give me my old job back?"

"Sure," the bartender said. "Sure." The fat man smiled and put one foot on the brass rail and leaned one elbow comfortably on the bar. He sipped his beer sadly, remembering the high estate from which he had fallen. But the bartender set out a couple of glasses and went forward to the window with the feather duster and dislodged the flies that had congregated there.

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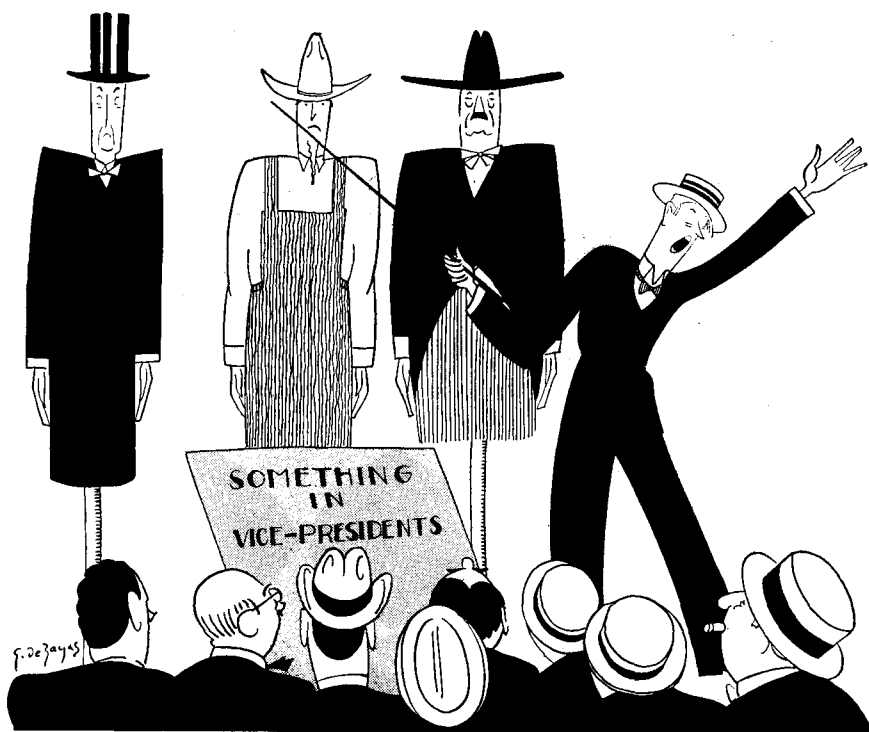
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## The Lesser Half

A VICE-PRESIDENTIAL candidate is part of the sand with which the proverbial party ostrich covers its head at convention time.

By THE GENTLEMAN AT THE KEYHOLE

to take Judge Kenyon. They gave him General Dawes, and Mr. Coolidge never forgave Dawes for being thrust upon him.

There is no more persistent delusion than that a party can compensate for the weakness of its candidate for President by naming exactly the opposite kind of man for Vice President.

In the last seventy-five years nobody has ever been elected President because of the strength which his associate on the ticket gave him, and no one has ever been defeated for President because of the weakness of his political partner.

Well, how about the Vice-Presidential candidate's ability to carry his own state and thus add electoral votes to his ticket? Nil too. One cannot conceive of an election so close that the friends of the Vice-Presidential candidate hailing from one state will swing that decisive state into line.

As a matter of fact, even candidates for President do not carry their own states unless those states are normally carried by their own party. John W. Davis did not carry New York or West Virginia, whichever state he came from. Governor Cox did not carry Ohio. Woodrow Wilson did not carry New Jersey in 1916 and carried it in 1912 only because the Republicans were split.

So there is a lot of hokum about the geographical considerations to which party managers pay so much attention.

### Wasted Mental Horsepower

THE Vice-Presidential humor was exemplified at both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions of 1924. At New York John W. Davis was nominated by 103 arduous ballots. A mate had to be got in a hurry. Senator Thomas J. Walsh wouldn't run. Governor Silzer of New Jersey was practically selected when someone said, "My Gosh, you may say that this man Davis comes from West Virginia, but everyone knows he comes from New York. You can't nominate for Vice President a man who comes from just across the Hudson River!"

Someone suggested Charley Bryan! Mr. Davis was Morgan's lawyer, and Charley Bryan's big brother, Bill, had said a lot of unkind things about Morgan. So it was Charley Bryan, making with Davis the most absurd ticket ever offered—a ticket doomed anyway.

The Republicans missed a similar absurdity only by the narrowest margin. Mr. Coolidge wanted a radical on the ticket with him. He preferred Senator Borah, but failing Borah he was willing

Vice-Presidential nominations was that which ultimately put the somber Mr. Coolidge in the White House. The Republicans in Chicago were all set to nominate Senator Lenroot as Mr. Harding's running mate, when an egoist from Oregon shouted, "Coolidge!"

All the delegates earlier had received a copy of the book, "Have Faith in Massachusetts." So the word "Coolidge" set a whole current of prayer-meeting associations going in their minds. It is the only time on record that a title of a book ever made a President.

The Democratic candidate for President will be practically already chosen when the Houston convention meets, so the choice of a Vice President to run with Governor Smith will receive a good deal of attention.

There are doubtful sections of the country and two theories about the opinion as to prohibition that the candidate for Vice President should hold. One area for whose support the Democrats should bid is the doubtful states, especially Kentucky and Tennessee, and the other is the corn belt.

Then one notion is that, Governor Smith being a Wet, his running mate should be a Dry. The other is that the enthusiasm of the Wets for Governor Smith will be chilled unless a Wet is also nominated for second place on the ticket. The election of a wet President will not make any practical difference, since the President cannot change and must enforce the dry law.

Whether a Dry, aspiring to preside over the Senate, likes his toddy and a Wet drinks nothing stronger than ice-cream soda is of no practical importance, nevertheless it consumes vast amounts of mental horsepower.

There are two leading candidates for the second place on the Democratic ticket, Representative Cordell Hull, a Dry from the doubtful border state of Tennessee, and ex-Senator Gilbert M. Hitchcock, a Wet from the doubtful corn-belt state of Nebraska. One would no doubt make vast numbers forget that Al Smith was a Wet who couldn't do anything about it. And the other would make an equal number forget that Al Smith is an Eastern city man who never saw a plow.

A real solution of this problem would be to have at least six candidates for Vice President on each ticket, so that every section and every shade of opinion might be conciliated.

## The Law Beaters

Continued from page 6

and slipped the silencer into my pocket. I put the gun in his right hand. Yes, I made sure he was right-handed. Then I went out, letting the door lock itself behind me. But before I went I opened his bathroom window about six inches.

"What for?"

"I'm coming to that. I told you I always worked things out in advance—and this was one job that had to be perfect. No mistakes. I walked out of the building. I was absolutely calm and clear-headed. I went to a store on Broadway and bought something and then came back to my house and dropped in on the manager, whom I knew, a decent old Scotsman who thought I was a Wall Street man. I chatted with him a bit and then asked him how he'd like to play a little bridge in my place that evening. I knew he was a bug about the game. He jumped at the chance and said he'd get two other players.

IN THAT building lived two doctors, the Andersons, father and son, well-known eye specialists, and Black, the manager, brought them along to my apartment, and we played bridge for half an hour or so. Then, while I was dummy, I stepped into my bathroom and took from my pocket the firecracker I had bought, lit its long fuse, and tossed it through Vogel's bathroom window, which was across a narrow areaway, not four feet from mine.

"I was back at the table, dealing the cards, when the cracker exploded. We all jumped when we heard it. 'Sounds like a shot next door,' one of the Andersons said. 'We'd better investigate,' Black said.

"So Black and the rest of us went to Vogel's apartment and pounded on the door, and, getting no answer, Black opened it with his master key. There lay the detective, still warm, and the smell of powder from the cracker filled the room. Naturally, the doctors and Black bent over the dead man, so no attention was paid to what I did, which was to slip into the bathroom, grab up what was left of the cracker and stuff it into my pocket. When I came back the Andersons were solemnly pronouncing it a case of suicide. I had three very substantial citizens who could swear that when the shot was fired I was innocently playing bridge with them at a quarter of a cent a point—

"Neat!" ejaculated Repton. "Damn neat!"

"It wasn't bad for a beginner, I thought," said Shreve.

"Lord," said Repton. "It's 'way after midnight. I wish I could get to sleep. But I can't."

"Well, you've got a story," Shreve suggested. "You might as well come across with it. I did, you know."

Repton stared at the floor a while in brooding silence.

"Yes, I've got a story," he said. "Why shouldn't I tell it? It's better than sitting here—doing nothing."

"That's true," said Shreve. "Here's the bottle. Well?"

"I had to eliminate a man too," Repton said. "I had no more compunction about doing it than I would have about crushing a tarantula. I hated him. I think he was born into the world for no other reason than to devil me. We started out by being partners, Andrew Erskine and I. Not that I ever really liked him. But he was as clever as sin. I trusted him about half an inch, but I woke up one day to find that even that was too much. We'd been promoting a little company together, with the general idea of skimming the cream and leaving the stockholders with nothing but some thin blue water.

"In the middle of it, I had to go to Albany on some other business, and when I got back home I found that Erskine had played me as filthy a trick as ever one white man played on another. He'd walked off with the spoils and left me holding the bag, and the worst part of it was that I couldn't do a thing about it. He was a smooth

worker. He fixed it so he came out of it with cash and credit, and I was left with a black eye and empty pockets.

"I swore I'd get Erskine some day. I tried. But he kept getting richer and fatter and smugger, and every time I had a tilt with him he sneaked over a punch below the belt and left me flat on the mat. While we're being confidential, I might as well admit that I was afraid of Erskine, which, after all, is the chief reason why anybody hates anybody. Anyway, I hated Andrew Erskine and felt I had good and sufficient reason for hating him. But everyone in Blansford knew we were bitter enemies. So it was a sure thing that if anything violent happened to Erskine, fingers would point straight at me. All I could do was to let my hate fester inside me.

"I did pretty well at that—in spite of Erskine. I made big money—and spent it fast. What I was after was one big killing that would put me on Easy Street the rest of my days. At last my big chance came. Or, rather, I made it come. No need to go into details. It was my own idea and a sound one. Not exactly ethical, maybe, by the strictest standards—but within the law. It was an elaborate water-power operation—and I worked on it a good six years. I put every dime I could lay my hand on into it.

"Then I found out something that almost cracked my spine. One man held the key to my door, and he could block me. Of course it was Andrew Erskine. He stood squarely in my path and there was no way round him. I could see only one solution. Erskine had to go. The question was: How? My enmity for him was well known. I could take no chances. I couldn't picture myself enjoying my money much if I had to spend most of it to keep out of jail. So I sat down and considered the question—and I found an answer.

"What?" questioned Shreve.

"What does a good executive do," Repton asked, "when a job must be done for which he hasn't the technical training? Why, he hires an expert, of course. That's what I did."

Shreve grinned. "Sensible idea, but how did you find one?" he said.

"It took some hunting," Repton said. "I went to Chicago, where I didn't know a soul, and hung around the underworld dives and kept my eyes and ears open, and pretty soon in a speak-easy I spotted a man who was in the business. He was a soft-spoken, well-dressed chap with a pinched white face—a dope, I guess. Ike Mance was his name. I made a date to meet him that night. I rented a car and drove it myself out Oak Park way and picked Ike up at a street corner where I'd told him to wait.

WE DROVE into the country and parked in a lonely lane, and had a talk. He was as businesslike as if he'd been selling me a ton of coal. My proposition didn't surprise him one bit. We dickered about the price, and he finally agreed to do it for twenty-five hundred down, in cash, and twenty-five hundred when the job was done. He agreed to start east on the midnight train. I went to French Lick Springs and played some golf with a party of Albany business men I knew, who were staying there. When Andrew Erskine died suddenly I intended to have plenty of unimpeachable witnesses who could swear that I was hundreds of miles away from the scene of the sad event.

Four days after I parted from Mance I read in a New York newspaper a headline I'd been looking for—'DEATH OF UP-STATE CAPITALIST.' The police, the story said, were somewhat mystified by the death of Andrew Erskine. He had been found in his roadster, which had hit a tree and had been smashed up some but hardly enough to account for the injuries which had caused his death. They called it a queer accident, those brainy cops did, and let it go at that. Mance was a capable workman, all