

Farewell to Spring

By Sidney Herschel Small

The story of a swift and perilous romance laid in the turbulent China of today

IT WAS a breathlessly hot afternoon, with the sun already behind the hills; the blank sky was like a silver dome. Past the doorway of Wu Wei Ling's house in the Street of Perfect Peace roared the common noises of a Chinese city.

Beggars were everywhere: blind beggars, burly rascals, emaciated ones, women with babies, grandmothers, but on this afternoon none of them cursed as they passed the doorway of Wu Wei Ling—who was not as charitable as he was wealthy. Instead, they smiled and pointed. Squatted with his rags against the doorway, for all to see, was the foulest beggar of them all.

This beggar, when he lifted an arm to scratch himself, showed beneath his rags the dull red robe of a lama. *Hai-ee!* How Wu Wei Ling was losing face! For, China-fashion, the beggar would remain before the merchant's door until he was paid to remove himself, unless, of course, one of Wu Wei Ling's servants slipped a knife into him as he slept. But the scoundrel had selected a wise time to squat on the porcelain tiles; it was well known that this was the name-day of the Wu family, and that there was to be a feast for the oldest son. Something would need to be done before the guests arrived. No person would enter a place where a beggar, and a priest at that, was reciting an imaginary and uncomplimentary ancestry of the owner.

SOMETHING had to be done, but the ancient night watchman had passed on his first round of the Street of Perfect Peace before a servant opened the door and growled, "*Yau mat peng a.*" Then the beggar—he was a tall man when he stood up, and lean like border men—gathered his tatters together, picked up the mendicant's begging-bowl, and followed the servant inside, to the room where Wu Wei Ling was waiting.

The fat merchant glanced at the red robe underneath the beggar's coat. "How much?" he said tonelessly.

The sum desired was so small that Wu Wei Ling barely refrained from starting. He said, "I will pay half," and reached into a drawer of his desk, taking out a silk purse and carefully selecting those coins which seemed a bit light in weight. When five of them had passed from purse to hand, being a quarter of the amount asked, he looked up. And he looked squarely into the muzzle of a gun.

His paunch began to shake. He whimpered, "*Ai!* Take all of the coins. I meant to give them to you. Do not kill me. I was only joking. I—"

Then, daring to glance higher than the steady gun, he stopped.

The man standing so near him was



Illustrated by
Ralph Pallen
Coleman

For a full minute she stared at what she saw: the brutal Li Yeng, the girl in the arms of a red lama. Then, head high, she said, "This is a house of peace. Go away"

smiling. Not the thin Oriental smile of vindictive victory, but the broad grin of a white man.

"I did the joking," the man dressed as a red lama said. "Sorry if it was a bad one. But—well, don't you think I can get into the temple of the Dragon King for you, and bring back the Kuan Yin image you want?"

WU SIGHED with gusty relief. He slid his tongue over dry lips before saying, in excellent English, "You would have fooled anyone, Mr. McArthur. I know you now, but only because you smiled. You learned this in the hill country?"

"Three years teaches a man a lot," McArthur agreed. "It's a long time to have worked for nothing," he added, as if this explained the masquerade.

In a way, it did. Ben McArthur had come down from the Tchou Shan hills with data and maps, only to learn that the Southern Star Oil Company was bankrupt, and that Wu Wei Ling had taken the first two years' salary partially to cover the cost of the last caravan sent out with supplies for McArthur's men. The salary for the third year had never been forwarded. Wu had offered the white man his trans-

portation back to the States, in return for the figures and maps, but this McArthur had refused, since he considered it property belonging to the defunct organization and not his own.

He had come back from the hills full of the desire to go home; it was during the fourth bitter evening at the inn that he heard a swashbuckling young Chinese of good family mention Wu Wei Ling's desire for the porcelain goddess in the temple of the Dragon King. This was the night of the fifth day.

Wu wasted no time; in dealing with white men there was never need of the courteous preliminaries. He said, "You know I wish the Kuan Yin. Do you know why?"

"There is blindness in your eyes?"

"For myself, I would not care," Wu Wei Ling announced sorrowfully. "Tonight, as you may have been informed, is the name-day of my family. There will be a feast, with stuffed pig and roasted duckling, but my heart will be heavy. Wu Yeung, my son, has been afflicted by the gods, despite all of my offerings and prayers. His sight is troubled. Doctors have said nothing can be done, and so, like the Emperors, I desire the ancient Kuan Yin, in order to have the porcelain ground to fine dust and used as sacred medicine. You know the story?"

"The Great Emperor had six Kuan Yins made of porcelain and unknown drugs, in honor of the recovery of his son's sight. One exists, at Yang Ho. Yang Ho's bad country. Bandits. Chinese and Japanese fighting around it. The priests might be glad to sell the image, and when you get it—if I have any luck—you could chip off as much as you need, and present the goddess to a temple here."

"I could, and I will," beamed Wu. "If you bring the image, I will recompense you for every penny you have lost. If you cannot obtain it, I will nevertheless furnish you with passage to the States, and still pay you for your maps. . . . No?—not the maps?"

McArthur said, "No maps."

"You leave tonight?"

"And have a gang of bandits stick a knife into me before I'm away from the shadow of the Wall? In the morning. I'll start out with some caravan."

ON THE fourth day out McArthur left the caravan on the Yang Ho plain, shuffling northward through the dust. He was filthy and he was tired, and he looked every bit the part he was playing—that of a red lama. When he begged a bowlful of millet at a farm he learned that the hum of insects he had heard was really the sound of firing, and that the Chinese were in deadly fear of Li Yeng's bandits.

The Great Gate of Yang Ho was closed when he saw it at last; closed, and with a horde of men about it. Head down, muttering and mumbling over his beads, begging-bowl bumping against his thigh, Ben McArthur padded toward the gate, and never looked up until a brawny Chinese jerked at his arm.

"A priest! Pray that these gates fall, or—"

McArthur said calmly, "I see a cart which you have used to climb up—"

"And when we do, the villagers slash off our hands. Pray, lama; have the gods remove the gate!"

"If you will take a piece of the cart and pry off those rusted hinges," the red lama suggested mildly, "there will be no need to trouble the gods."

Li Yeng shrieked, "Ho! Here is a priest of sense!"

When a more valiant villager than his brothers attempted to rise above the protecting wall and discharge his old weapon, Li Yeng himself drilled him through the head. The bandit leader growled, "I hit him too high," and, as

bandits tore at the hinges, the bell of the Dragon King temple began to beat with long, golden strokes, and Li Yeng shouted to the lama, "I will make you head priest, and you shall assist the Kuan Yin in making my eyes see better again!"

HERE was a complication which McArthur had no reason for considering; surely it could be turned to his purpose. While he worked away at his beads, head busy, the gate went down with a crash, and Li Yeng's men rushed in through the dust. McArthur went with them. Bandits started toward the nearest houses and shops. At the first bang on door or shutter they were given admission; what else was there to be done? From one of the shops several women were dragged out, and the men of Li Yeng immediately plucked from their victims' heads the silver ornaments and hairpins. A grandmother tried to shield a girl as best she could, wielding a thick stick and bitter curses, but the men merely laughed; and then the old woman began to weep in a quiet and hopeless way, knowing only too well what would follow the plundering.

Grandmother and mother Li Yeng neglected, but placed his hand on the youngest of the women. Terror, more than courage, gave her strength to tear away from the caress; she began to run along the widest curved street of Yang Ho, whimpering and sobbing, with Li Yeng—handicapped by pulling the red lama with him—and a dozen of his cohorts in hot pursuit. A shot fired above her head made her fly the faster. At a crisscrossing of alleys, the foremost bandits rushed along the principal way, but Li Yeng, foxlike, caught sight of something which moved in the purple shadows of a side street, turned to the right, and jerked the man dressed as a red lama after him. The chase began anew.

Past the temple they pelted—the girl, the red lama, and Li Yeng; past the dogs of Fo and the tip-tilted roof and the dragons on the eaves of the bell tower, and clear to the middle of the town, where the quarry ran between two white-painted gate posts and toward a low, gray building. McArthur caught sight of familiar home flowers: pale blue larkspur, the darker hue of Canterbury bells, erect foxglove and bright, sprawling verbena; then the Chinese girl had hurled her panting body against the door, hands clawing at the wood.

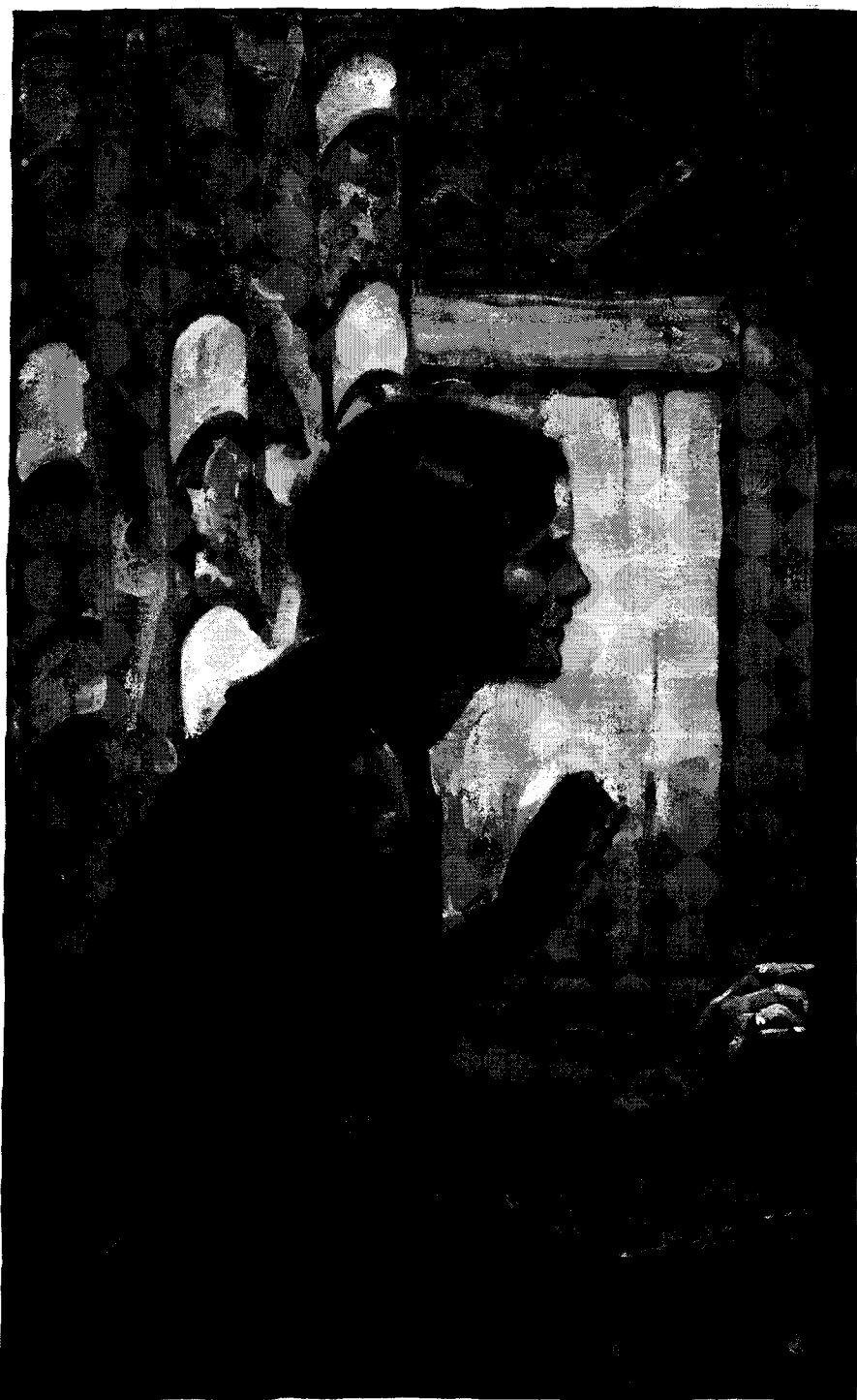
Li Yeng had reached her; as he tore her away from the door, the red lama managed to get between them; the door opened while he held her in one arm, sliding his free hand under his robe for his automatic. The porcelain Kuan Yin was forgotten.

MCARTHUR'S hand stiffened about the butt of his gun; his hand stiffened, and so did his entire body. He was seeing the first white girl he had looked at for three years—a girl whose scorn and anger surmounted whatever fears she might have! For a full minute she stared at what she saw; the brutal Li Yeng, the girl in the arms of a red lama, who was bigger, dirtier even than the bandit leader; and then, head high, she said, "This is a house of peace. The girl belongs here. Go away."

Even in Chinese, her voice was low. The bandit stared at her. He said, "I like you better than this other. Come here, and—"

"It is forbidden," McArthur croaked, tongue thick in his mouth. "If you touch a white woman, Li Yeng, the great Kuan Yin will not look with favor on what you desire, and her image will not help your eyes."

Li Yeng scratched his chin. "Does that rule hold for all women, lama?"



"For all women, Li Yeng."

"Mah! Well, it can wait until my eyes are cured. Then I can better appreciate their beauty. However, I am afraid that they will run away, or—"

"I am not going to run away," the white girl said, "nor are you coming into this house. The soldiers will—"

Li Yeng spat and wiped his mouth. "What soldiers?" he demanded practically. "I know that they are fighting to the north, and have no time for me. Be still; I wish to think. You and I, lama, will go to the temple, and take the porcelain Kuan Yin and—no; that will never do. While we are away, those men of mine will come and take what is rightfully mine. . . ."

"Hai! I have it! I will go to the temple and secure the image of the goddess. If you went, the priests would argue, since you are yourself a holy man. You will remain here. When my men arrive, as they will before long, you will tell them—" winking—"that I am inside, and very busy. If they tell you that you lie, and that they saw me going to the temple, you will say, 'If you enter, Li Yeng will cut off your ears,' and, since they know me, they will stay out. Here—this is my image of the robber-god. They will recognize it, and believe what you say."

McArthur took the little silver token; the Chinese girl was at the other's knees, pressing them as if she would

never let go. "Oh, Chun Chang," she moaned, "do not let them—"

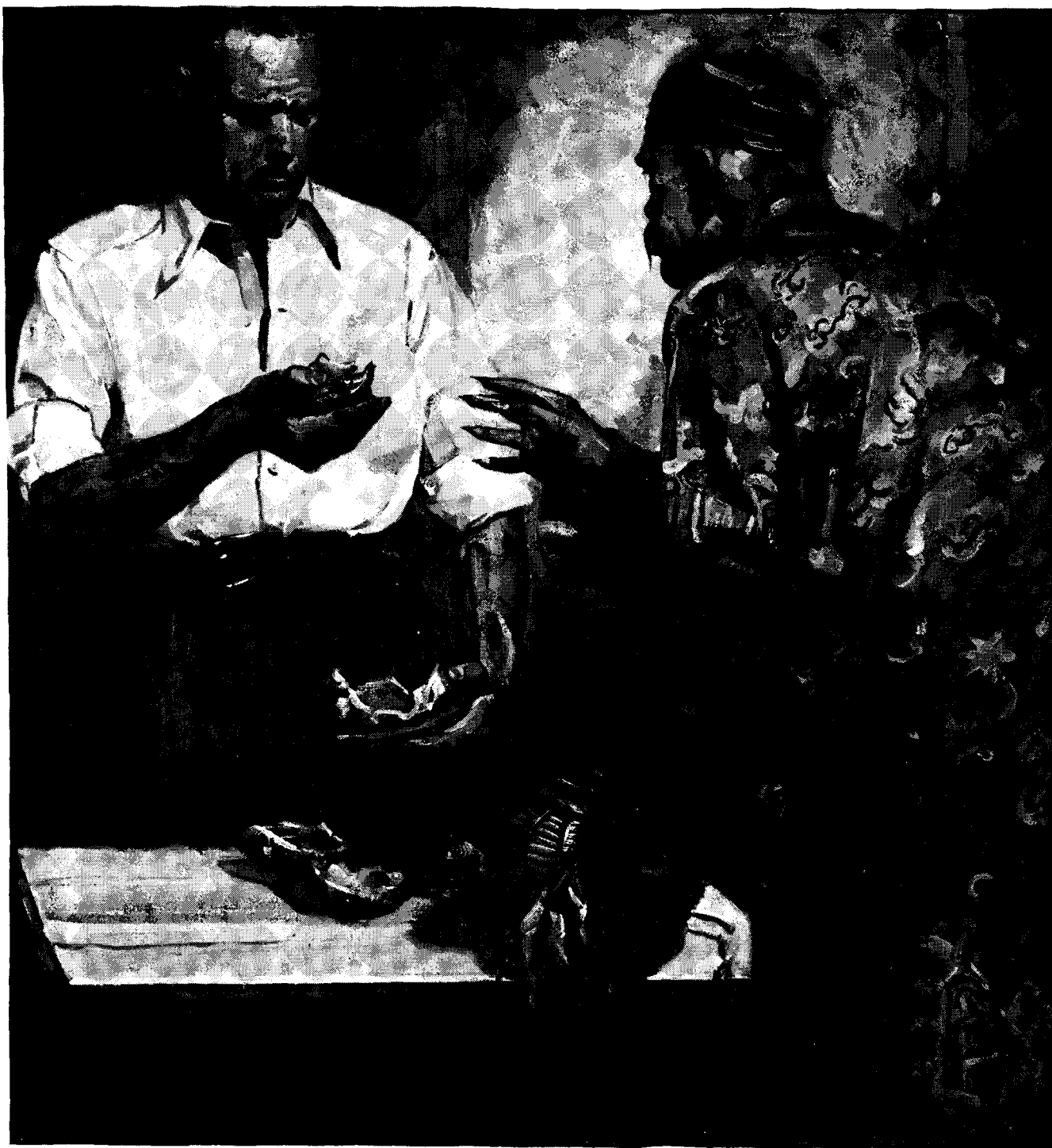
"No," the white girl promised.

"But, O lama," Li Yeng snarled, "if you do more than pray while I am gone, I will cut off your ears, gods or no gods." With that, patting the carved hilt of his knife, he turned and hurried down the path.

WHAT had the slender Chinese maid called her slim protectress? Chun Chang—Farewell to Spring! To McArthur, knowing his China well, this meant that the white girl was not only a missionary, but one who had taken vows. Who had given up her youth. . . . Farewell to spring, to hope, to love, to everything. . . . What the visitation of the bandits must mean to her, considering this, was horribly apparent to Ben. He wondered why she had done this. . . . She was dressed in white, immaculate, bringing out the smooth tan of her face; her hair was shining, her head desperately high. As McArthur looked at her, the coolest and daintiest person he had ever seen, he saw that her eyes were becoming brighter, and that she was fighting down tears.

Dark, lean face streaked with sweat, robe odorous in the sun, begging-bowl and beads clattering together, the "red lama" reached forward and touched her arm. Reassuringly, gently.

"A priest," the girl said, flinging off



"Aieee!" breathed the merchant. "It was there! The tale was true." He added unhappily, "And you have found it, and it is yours"

his hand. Bitterly, choking over the words, "You heard what Li Yeng said. If you—"

She was playing for time, and Ben knew it. Nor was there any time to be wasted. Earnestly, in English, the white man said, "I'm not going to do anything except get you out of here. Now, don't—"

Her eyes widened. Hope filled them, to be replaced with stark fear, for Ben's broad grin, intended to inspire confidence and—as it had with Wu Wei Ling—explain his masquerade without the waste of words, was an awful thing in his stained, dust-coated, grimy face. It made him look diabolical.

"You were educated in a mission," the girl muttered. "Oh, go away! Remember what you were taught! Tell Li Yeng that—oh, anything!"

She was close to breaking-point. Ben said quietly, "He won't listen to me. Chun Chang. Why didn't you get out of here while you could? I can't hocus-pocus Li Yeng again. He'll come back, and—what a beautiful mess!"

She said, "Oh!" And then, "You're a white man!"

"And I wish I had a cigarette," Ben told her.

Her hand was against her cheek. "Please—come inside, and perhaps..."

The room was cool. "I stay near the door," Ben said, and squatted down. "You sit way off. That'll do. Good. We've got to talk fast. Li Yeng has something wrong with his eyes. Or so he says. He's at the temple, after the old Kuan Yin. I came for it myself. It's not important now. We've got to fool Li Yeng somehow. That's the only way to get you out of this. . . ."

BEN had talked until she sat quietly.

She said, "He has a dust infection. I can cure it. He'll be grateful, and—"

"Not him. I know him too well, even if we just met. He's a treacherous dog." The white man unclenched his hand, in which he held the little silver facsimile of the god of thieves. A paunched idol, with ugly face and outstretched, clawing talons. A slow grin moved McArthur's lips. "I've got an idea. It might work. When our playmate returns—" Ben paused; his voice became lower, deeper, as he heard the footsteps. . . . "Om mani padme hum—O jewel in the lotus—great god of the Sixth Mountain, I pray that the sight of the powerful Li Yeng become as that of the hawk of heaven, and..."

Li Yeng strode across the soft matting, leaned his rifle against the table,

and said, "I am glad that I return to find you praying, lama. Here is the Kuan Yin. Priests had all fled, except one arguing ape." The bloody testimony of what had happened was on the stock of the gun. "Grind up the Kuan Yin, lama, so that I may better see these maids I intend to enjoy. Get to work!"

Ben stood up slowly. He took the magnificent white porcelain image, and said soberly, "As you command, Li Yeng. I will use the most sacred portion of the Kuan Yin, which is the third hand—"

The bandit seized the image. "Am I a man of so little importance that you would take but one hand to cure my eyes?" he bellowed. With a swift gesture he slapped the Kuan Yin to the table, so that it broke into five or six parts. "For Li Yeng, the entire goddess must be rubbed to powder. Make haste, lama."

Sweeping the pieces of porcelain into his begging bowl, McArthur said, "Squat down, Li Yeng. So." He began to grind porcelain against the bowl. "Close your honorable eyes, Li Yeng."

Li Yeng shut his eyes.

McArthur tucked the long wide sleeve of his red robe above his elbow. Then his terrific uppercut, swung from the side, lifted Li Yeng from the floor, and sent his body crashing against the matting.

"How's that for a knockout?" Ben grinned. "Let's tie him."

The Chinese girl whimpered in her corner; the girl in white brought her nursing bag; together, they bound Li Yeng securely. Ben dragged him out of the room, and shoved him out of sight beneath a bed.

"That's that," McArthur said. He put the fragments of the Kuan Yin in the bag. "Might as well take 'em along."

"But—"

"Don't argue. It's our only chance. We can't stay here."

"Wai Lo—the girl. She—they'll..."

"Anybody else?"

The nurse shook her head; she found a cape for herself, a coat for the Chinese girl. "Dr. Andrews went south. She's been gone a day. The hospital's empty. I'm ready."

Ben asked, "Afraid?"

"Yes. Terribly."

"Me too. Let's go..."

THEY slept that night in a grove of mulberry trees, after McArthur had begged a bowl of rice from a farm; Wai Lo curled up like a cat, but the white girl sat for a long time with her hands locked about her knees.

"They'll burn the hospital," she said.

"Afraid so. Don't think about it."

"I can't help it. I've been there a year. With Dr. Andrews. We had a terrible time. No money to do things."

"Just be glad you got away," Ben said.

She slept at last, on the thick, dry grass; in sleep, one hand was under her head. Her dreams, if she dreamed, were fearful, for again and again she turned, until at last her other hand, extended, found the white man's arm. After that she slept quietly.

It was a full hour before McArthur covered her fingers with his own. The night was old when he touched the back of her hand with his lips. The first white girl he had seen in three years. The prettiest he'd ever seen in all his life. They'd get to Wu's city together. He'd take his pay; he had the entire Kuan Yin, although it was broken. Then they'd go down to Shanghai. . . .

The structure of his dream broke down suddenly. Chun Chang! That was what the Chinese girl had called her. Chun Chang. Farewell to Spring. The name given Chinese nuns who had renounced the world. Why, she wouldn't want to go anywhere with him! Once he had managed to get her to Wu's town, she'd vanish—probably to some place worse than Yang Ho. . . .

WHEN he awoke, at the first ray of the sun, the girl was already moving about; she said, "I went to pieces last night, Mr. —"

"McArthur." Then, abruptly, "Shall I call you Chun Chang, or—"

"My name is Meade," she said, "but you can call me Chun Chang—everyone does. And—well, it's my name."

They made much better time than the caravan had; the girl was tireless, and when they stopped to rest it was because Wai Lo was exhausted. More than once McArthur carried her. Because there was nothing else to do, man and white girl talked—Ben's years in the hill country; her own, nursing. About herself, she said little or nothing, nor did Ben question her.

They were in sight of Wu's own city when McArthur said, "You'll go down to Shanghai? I'm going; we might go together." Like that. Casual.

"I think I'll go on down to Shanghai. But you needn't bother," she said. "I'll go in a few days. You'll want to get started as soon as you can, after Wu Wei Ling has paid you."

Ben said, "I haven't asked, because it isn't any of my business, but you've

(Continued on page 30)

The College Cougar

By Stanley Paul

*Out on an Idaho potato farm
there lives a happy wrestler.
Doris is with him. And why
not? Doris managed the plot*

THE big mystery of the wrestling game is why didn't Hopping Herbie the Hornet answer the bell for the second fall in the bout which he and I had in N. Y. for the fair and square championship of the world; when already he had the first fall won from me?

This is a mystery which is talked about wherever there are wrestlers and managers. It is also talked about by sports writers. There are two people who know what happened and that is all. One is Doris, the big Boston blonde. The other is I. And I am so sick of picking up some newspaper and reading: "Here is what really happened to Hopping Herbie the Hornet" that I will tell the whole thing right, and there will be no more bolony going around about it.

It is some little while ago that this all takes place and it begins in Boston. There are three wrestling spots for what you might call big dough. They are Boston, Chicago and N. Y. The choice spot is N. Y., and the champion there at the time I am telling you about is Chenski, the Wild Russian. I am then the champ around Boston and there is a champ out in Chicago, but that is so far away that no one worries about it. Now the customers in each place think that their champ is the real McCoy because wrestling at that time is such a low-brow sport that the papers do not carry much of what takes place in other cities. I am hailed in Boston as Skull Darnegan the Terrible Tad, which makes things aces for me and my manager, Snivel Hart. It is a sweet racket.

That is, it is sweet for quite some time. Then the college boys begin to come into the game and things begin to go sour. I am not blaming this on the college boys, as they are full of dives and butts which the customers like to see; but it is because they are in the game that the newspapers begin to pay some attention to it and that is where our trouble starts. One of the morning rags lets a young reporter loose on me and he follows me all around and pretty soon he is yipping that I am a fake, and that I am meeting the same guy under different names for the championship all over New England, and that this guy is not able to throw a bag of wool down even if it is pushed for him. The other papers take up the yell and pretty soon we are in a bad way, as the honest matches which we put on are not so much fun for the customers to watch.

THINGS go on like this for quite a while. I mix once or twice with a college boy but there is not much money and no action in that, although once in a while I let one of them get a fall on me to please the customers, and I am about ready to go over and challenge Chenski in N. Y. for the sake of a work-out, when things begin to happen.

Chenski is on one of his parties and is trying to show a Broadway babe how good a champ, who is full of panther sweat, can drive a twelve-cylinder car, when he turns it over on top of himself and the car crashes the back of his neck with a two-ton rabbit punch and Chenski is all through for anything but weaving baskets.

That throws everything wide open. The N. Y. papers begin to thump for a match between me and the Chicago champ to see who is the real goods to take Chenski's place. The Boston papers take it up and say that now is my chance to square myself with the public by going down to N. Y. and taking on this Chicago champ honest and see who

is the real champ of the both of us, instead of me throwing a broken-down old wrestler all over New England under twenty different and horrible sounding names.

"Who," I ask Snivel, "is the world's champ out in Chicago today?"

"A college guy," Snivel replies. "He is known as Hopping Herbie the Hornet, and is full of trick jumps and butts like all the college boys and gets his name from the fact that he is in the air more than he is on the mat. He will not say what college he is from, but his manager told the boys he was from Custer College, which no one has been able to locate, and the sports writers all call him the College Cougar."

I laugh because I have seen so many clucks trying to cash in on this college-boy stuff.

"What do you think?" I ask Snivel.

"I think," says Snivel, "that I will take a run down to N. Y. and see Jeff Tuke, the promoter."

SNIVEL is gone for a week and when he comes back he is all smiles.

"Skull," he says, "it is on the griddle. Tuke grabs the match and will ballyhoo the pants off it. The Hornet comes East next week and we meet him to sign. Now Tuke says N. Y. is nuts on college-boy wrestlers, so instead of throwing one in the ring at a time we will throw two. You are the other one and will be billed as the University Uhlán."

"What university did I go to?" I ask.

"That is not important," says Snivel, "but if it should be I will think one up for you."

All of which is O. K. by me, so I find myself the next week in N. Y. It is Tuesday and we are up in the office of Jeff Tuke, the promoter, waiting for this Herbie Hornet to show up and sign. All of a sudden the door opens and in come two guys wheeling a low truck with a three-hundred-pound sandbag on it. Walking behind them is the biggest blond bozo I ever seen outside of a bad dream. He has got inches on me in height and reach and has a chest on him like the front of a granite quarry. He is dead-pan with a face like a he-doll and his hair is all yellow and wavy. He has no marks on that handsome smush at all, which is strange. He is followed by a fly-looking gent in a derby, who walks up to the desk and sticks his mitt at Snivel. It is Skipe Bonomo, the Hornet's manager.

"As I live and breathe," Bonomo says, "my old pal. And you, Mr. Tuke—"

But no one is paying any attention to him as we are all looking at this blond baboon who has now pulled the sandbag off of the truck and has a scissors on it on the floor. That doll face of his has gone vicious and all of a sudden he snarls and heaves the sandbag up in his arms and runs across the floor with it and crashes it against the wall. So help me, I thought he'd go through to the street. The office shakes and some pictures fall off the wall.

"For gosh sakes!" says Tuke getting out of his chair, but no one hears him as we are now watching the next act.

The big blond has backed off and is bobbing and weaving like a pug and then he leaves his feet and dives at the bag through the air. His head goes in with a chunk, right up to his shoulders, and one end busts and sand pours out on the floor.

"NOW, Herbie," says Bonomo, "that's enough for now. You know," he says to us, "I can't keep him out of training a minute. Herbie," he says, "come over and meet the boys."

Herbie growls and bites several large chunks out of the carpet which is on Tuke's floor, but finally he stops and gets up; brushes himself off and comes over to the desk.

"How do you do, gentlemen?" he says.

I went tight all over at the sound of his voice. It was smooth and velvety and went with him like cream with a tiger. Bonomo does the introductions all around. I shake with Herbie and a knuckle cracks, he gives my mitt such a crusher.

Tuke says: "Let's get this over with, boys. It's simple. I take thirty per cent; you boys take seventy. Yours is split fifty-fifty. Right?"

"Right," we all say, and sign.

Most always you can pass a few kind words with any wrestler when you are signing as there is nothing to be sore about when reporters ain't around. So I says:

"What college did you go to, Mr. Hornet?"

"Hopper," he corrects me. "I am not saying what college I went to, as my college is sacred to me. I was only

there for the football season, but that makes no difference. I would not let it be known what college I am from while I am a wrestler, because wrestling is a dirty game, and while I am in it I am even dirtier. I got ideals. What university did you go to?" he comes back at me.

"The same as you," I says with a grin, but I don't like the look that comes into his eyes, so I say quick: "Ideals is a bad thing to have in this game. If you got those, then why are you in it?"

"Because," says Herbie, "it is one way of making money, and college men with brains are a drug on the market. When I have made enough money I will leave the game and buy a potato farm in Idaho. That is another one of my ideals."

"Well," I says, watching him toss a swivel chair up to the ceiling and letting it bounce off his chest on the way down, "I wish you luck."

"THANK you," says Herbie, picking up one of them small steel letter files and crushing it between his forearm and biceps. "There's just one thing, Mr. Darnegan: I do not like to maim a man, so when I am ready to fracture your spine I will stop long enough to give you a chance to say uncle. In my match last month with Horrible Horrigan, Mr. Horrigan was stubborn. I had to pull out three of his upper teeth with my fingers and break his clavicle before he would say uncle. In fact, he would say uncle only when I grabbed the clavicle and threatened to tear it loose and throw it to the customers. I hope you will not be like that."

I knew I was supposed to make big talk right back at this bozo but somehow I couldn't put my heart in it.

"No," I says, "I won't."

Well, a few mornings after that, while we are in training, I say to Snivel: "What is your real opinion of this Hornet guy?"

"Well," says Snivel, "there is a lot of talk about how they have to rebuild his camp every night on account of the way

