



### III

I DON'T know how I took that one. Instinctively, I knew Candy wasn't kidding, but even then I couldn't believe that she wanted to marry me.

Twenty million dollars is a lot of money. Candy Livingston was a lot of girl. The combination was pretty good. It could mean plenty of comfort and plenty of fun. It wasn't something you could laugh off even if you understood it. I didn't.

I sat on the couch alongside of her, doing nothing and saying the same thing. For the first time in our brief and unusual acquaintanceship, she was embarrassed. She was blushing, and I'd have bet my socks that she'd long ago forgotten how to do that. She dropped her cigarette in the ash tray and let it smolder. I reached over absently and ground it out. I wanted to talk, but I couldn't figure what to say. This was a ridiculous position to be in.

She said quietly, "You can't quite figure whether I mean it, can you?"

I nodded.

"I mean it. Straight across the board."

"Why?" The question popped out before I knew I was going to ask it.

She hesitated. "Perhaps," she said, "because I'm in love with you."

Once again I was hanging on the ropes. I didn't say a word, and probably looked as intelligent as a freshly caught fish. The faintest sort of a smile showed briefly on her lips. She said, "Unaccustomed as you are to public proposals . . . You still could make some sort of an answer."

"All right." I turned toward her. "I think

you mean it. I believe that's what you came for. I still can't figure why, and I still don't believe you'd want me to take you up on it."

"I know what I want. I usually get it."

"That isn't the point, Candy. Let me ask you a question: How many times have you been in love?"

"I lost count long ago."

"You see?"

"I don't see anything." She toyed with the platinum cigarette case, turning it over and over without looking at it. "I wish people could talk about love without being trite. But it isn't possible. There's been so much written about it—in so many ways—that you always sound as if you're repeating something you've read." She let that sink in, and then went on in a voice that wasn't quite steady. "Get this straight, Kirk. I've absorbed a large slice of life in my twenty-two years. More than I should, perhaps. That makes me wild, but it doesn't make me dumb. When the real thing comes along: I know it."

She stared at me levelly with her big blue eyes. She looked beautiful. I said slowly, "I wish we'd met a couple of years ago, Candy."

She nodded. "I thought it was that way."

"Let me explain: I think you're a grand gal. But it just happens that I'm all tied up emotionally. Dana and I want to get married. Unfortunately, her husband doesn't see it like that."

She asked abruptly, "How come Ricardo can't be pushed into a divorce?"

I gave it to her briefly. There was an interesting light in her eyes. "I'm not checking

## HAS NO ALIBI

By OCTAVUS ROY COHEN

### The Story:

KIRK DOUGLAS was trying to find a way to marry DANA WARREN, lovely dancing partner and wife of RICARDO SANCHEZ, when his life went haywire. First, an unknown person deposited \$100,000 in his bank account, then a total stranger named ETHEL BROWER was found murdered in his apartment. Suspected by POLICE LIEUTENANT GOLD, KIRK racked his brain for clues, got involved in more mystery when—dining at the Club Caliente—CANDY LIVINGSTON, spectacular owner of

twenty millions, made a play for him. Next, ARTHUR MAYBANK, hard-working intern at the McKinley Hospital and in love with AGNES SHERIDAN, nurse's aide, introduced him to JOHN FERGUSON who assigned him to a big postwar architectural project. He was celebrating with DANA when he heard that ARTHUR had been shot. Only slightly injured, ARTHUR had no information to offer, and KIRK, believing everything in some way centered about himself, got a bigger surprise later, while DANA was dining with him, when CANDY burst in and asked him to marry her.





**My fist flashed out and caught Ricardo. I knew that I had started something, but it was the way I had wanted it for a long time**

And she didn't know me. At least, I had no reason to believe she knew I was alive. So what might have been a good theory had to be pitched out of the window.

I don't know what time I got to sleep. I do know that I felt drugged when the alarm clock went off, and I was late getting to the office. A couple of the boys grinned and winked. They thought I had a hang-over.

I telephoned Arthur and invited him to have dinner with me that night. He said he'd be tickled pink, and told me he was back on full-time duty and feeling good. His arm was sore, of course, but it didn't really bother him.

I held off speaking to Dana until late afternoon. When I did call her to say I wouldn't be seeing her that evening, she was perfect. Her only reference to the previous night was casual. It was slightly kidding, but definitely not catty. We talked for a few minutes and that was that.

Arthur met me at the restaurant. He looked nervous and worried, but that was nothing new. He had looked that way ever since I first met him. We discussed the war and the big winter offensives in Europe. He asked how my work for Ferguson was getting on. We finished eating and went back to my apartment.

Arthur flopped in one chair and I sprawled out in another. We chewed the fat casually and let ourselves get sleepy. Arthur pulled out a cigarette and tried to fit it into his holder but it dropped out of his hand and rolled under the couch. He got down on his hands and knees and started searching for it. I started to help him, and he said he had it. He got up with the holder, and also with something else. He said, "You should tell the maid to sweep behind the couch, too."

I shrugged. He said, "Finders keepers, isn't it?"

"It all depends on what you find."

"A quarter," He smiled. "That's a lot of money to a guy like me."

He held it in his palm. I looked at it without interest. Then something clicked. I said, "Let me see that."

He handed me the coin. It was a quarter, all right, but it was like no other quarter in the world. One segment of it, perhaps a fifth of the coin, was absolutely flat. The rest of it was okay. Arthur said, "You can have it. I don't believe it could be spent."

I was staring at the coin. The brain—the same brain I'd been trying to tranquilize so that it would let me sleep—was doing nips.

I said, "You found this under the couch, Arthur?"

"Yeh. Sure. Why?"

I turned it over and looked at the other side. That was flat, too. I don't know what else I expected. Ideas were crowding in on me; ideas that I didn't like.

Arthur said, "Why all the excitement over a bum quarter?"

I said, "This is a very special quarter, Arthur. I know who it belongs to."

"Well . . . ?"

"It belongs to Ricardo. It's his luck piece. He'd rather lose his right eye than this."

Arthur said, "Then if the coin was here, it looks as though Ricardo must have been."

"Not when I was at home."

Arthur and I stared at each other. I knew we must be thinking the same thing.

Maybe Ricardo *had* been in my apartment. Maybe he'd been there one night when I wasn't at home.

Maybe he had been there with a girl named Ethel Brower.

I KEPT turning the coin over and over like a pancake that wouldn't cook the same on both sides. I could be wrong, of course. Maybe another streetcar had run over one fifth of another silver quarter. That was possible, but improbable. What was even more improbable was that the second silver quarter should find its way into my room.

Arthur Maybank sat watching me. I was

thinking so hard I would have bet he could hear my brain grinding. He ran slim, delicate fingers through hair that was too sparse for so young a man, and waited for me to say something. He didn't have long to wait.

I said, "You've known Ricardo and Dana almost as long as I have. Didn't either of them ever tell you about this?"

He shook his head. Then he smiled, just a little bit. "And so far," he said, "you haven't, either."

"It's quite a story. It always sounded silly to me and it'll probably strike you the same way. It deals with superstition, and your scientifically trained mind will reject it. But you mustn't."

He said, "I won't. I meet a lot of superstitious people at the hospital."

"The yarn goes back about ten or twelve years. At that time Ricardo Sanchez was unknown. All he'd ever succeeded in doing was to remain in a half-starved condition, but like a lot of optimists on the fringe of show business, he wouldn't give up."

"Whatever breaks he'd been having were bad ones. He had extended his limited credit until his friends either cut corners to avoid him, or he did the same to them for fear they'd request the return of loans which he couldn't return. He had an agent—they all do—and he had borrowed so much from his agent that he never went near the office. He was ill-fed, poorly clothed, discouraged and just about ready to become a beautiful floor-walker so that he could eat occasionally."

"One day, crossing Third Avenue, he saw something on the car track. It was a quarter. A car had run over a small portion of it. Four fifths of the coin was still good money. The remaining fifth was flat." I held the coin between two fingers so that Arthur could see it. "What it meant to Ricardo right then was doughnuts and coffee, provided he could persuade someone to take it."

"So he went looking for the only person he knew who might possibly stand another touch. His agent. He wanted to sell his quarter to the agent for a quarter he could spend. He wanted food."

I PAUSED long enough to fill my pipe and light it. "I'm giving you the details, Arthur, because they're important. Without them, you'll never understand how a thing like this can come to mean so much to an otherwise intelligent man."

"Don't apologize," Arthur was leaning back and watching me through half-closed eyes. "I'm interested."

"Knowing that he faced a two-to-one chance of being pitched out on his ear, Ricardo went to his agent's office. He met the agent just as he stepped inside the door. But to his amazement, he didn't get thrown out. The ten-per-center grabbed him and said Ricardo was just the man he wanted to see. He said there was an immediate opening in the chorus of a new musical that was on the verge of a Broadway opening. Would Ricardo take it? Ricardo would. He did. At the same time he borrowed five dollars from the agent. He didn't say anything about the flattened quarter. He kept that in his pocket as a luck piece."

"He got the job. He held it. What was more, from then on he began going up, and before the end of that show's run, he and a girl partner had supplanted the original couple. He and the girl went from there into a nice, small club as a ballroom team. Wham! Then a better engagement and another one still better."

"The rest you know. And through all of this he held tight to that luck piece. He credited it with all the luck he'd had."

"Several years ago he bought one of those little flat 18-carat cases which are called pill boxes. Just big enough to fit snugly into a vest pocket. He had it lined with purple velvet and he put his luck piece in it. He carries it everywhere. There's probably nothing in the world he values so highly."

Arthur said, "You think that the box might have opened and the coin dropped out . . . under certain circumstances?"

"It's possible. If Ricardo happened to be under enough nervous strain at the time, he might not notice."

Arthur crossed one leg over the other.

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out," she said. "Not as long as Dana stays married."

I still couldn't think of anything that fitted. I liked her better, at that moment, than ever before. But that wasn't being in love. She wasn't Dana, and she wasn't for me.

SHE straightened up suddenly, and started to laugh. "I've really put you on the spot, haven't I?"

I said, "I'm dazed, that's all."

"I'll answer some of the questions you're too considerate to ask. I fell for you the night I met you. Don't ask me why. I wouldn't be knowing the answer myself. Maybe it's because you didn't make a play for me."

She reached for another cigarette and lighted it. "Just remember this, Kirk: Until you hear from me to the contrary, the proposal stands. Nod your head and I'll come running. Now let's drop it."

That suited me fine. I started to say something. I don't know what it was, but it didn't matter because I never finished. A pair of arms were around my neck, a pair of soft, warm lips were pressed against mine. I'm not made of stone. The universe commenced spinning.

She pulled away and got up. She said, "Better fix yourself up. You're all over lipstick."

I went into the bathroom and looked in the mirror. I dabbed at my lips. I walked back into the room and tried to be nonchalant. I wouldn't have gotten away with it except that she was willing to string along.

She carried the ball from then on. No more talk of love or marriage, no more embarrassing questions. She'd made her pitch and it hadn't worked out. She wasn't through, but she wasn't pushing me around, either. She was more of a person than I had thought. Crazy as three sea gulls, perhaps, but there was something solid underneath.

We sat around and talked. It was silly talk, because we were both just killing time. We killed a lot of time. We killed it until almost three o'clock.

I insisted on taking her home, and rode her to a white apartment house that had a lobby choked with chromium and glass. She didn't ask me upstairs. I went back in the same taxi. I flopped in my reading chair and said, "Wow!" I felt uncomfortable and at the same time I felt good. It was something to reflect that I had said No to twenty million dollars.

This was another night when I was slated to stay awake. There were getting to be too many of them. I made some firm resolutions. Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man . . . and I let it stop there.

At four o'clock my eyes were still pinned back and my brain was racing. I was thinking of a lot of things and none of them fitted.

I was trying to connect Candy Livingston with the hundred thousand dollars which had been put to my credit at the bank. It wouldn't mean a thing to her, and she might have felt that it would boost my morale when the big moment occurred. But that was wrong, too, because when the hundred thousand had been given to me, I hadn't even met Candy.

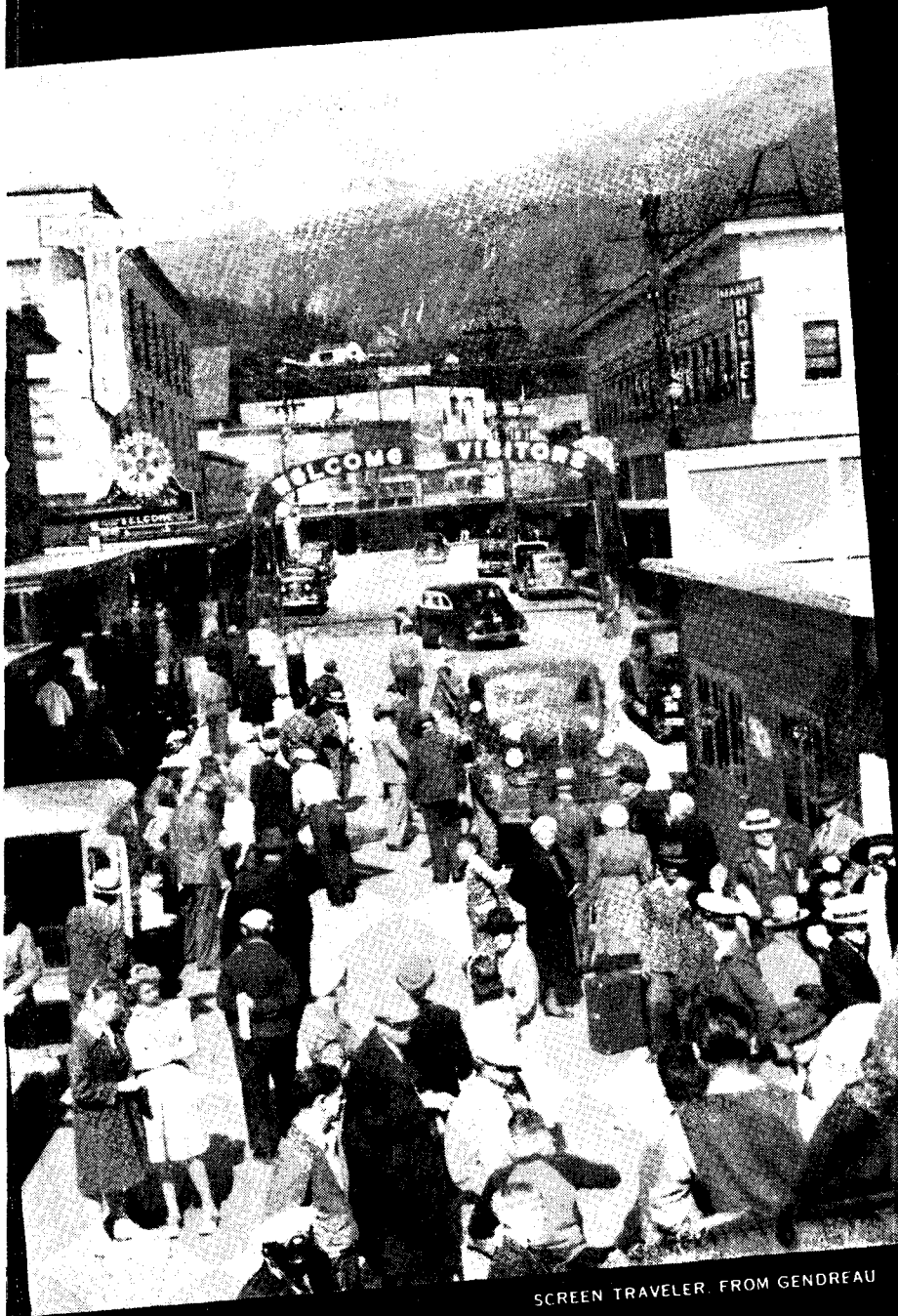


# Storm Over

# ALASKA

By Kyle Crichton

It's brewing because the Department of the Interior has begun to settle the Indians on reservations. White residents protest loudly; they say it would turn the best part of Alaska over to the natives



SCREEN TRAVELER. FROM GENDREAU

The Indians want to take over some of the most productive areas in Alaska. This town, Ketchikan, is involved in their claims. The whites, who have made Alaska what it is, object

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL



Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, left, and John Collier, former Commissioner of Indian Affairs, think the red man has something coming to him. They intend to see that his rights are protected according to the law

A WIND is roaring down from the north, filling the air with howls, shrieks, wails and strange lamentations. It is the Big Wind from Point Barrow and Ketchikan; the Midnight Special from Fairbanks, Anchorage and Sitka. It is headed straight for Washington, D. C., and the bloody but bumpproof head of the Honorable Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior. The white settlers of Alaska are firmly and blasphemously convinced that Horrible Harold is intent on giving Alaska back to the Indians.

This arises from the fact that the Department of the Interior has begun to set up Indian reservations in Alaska. Nobody kicked much when the natives were given lands in interior and northern Alaska and the Aleutian Islands because that was hopeless territory fit only for Eskimos and Allyoots (Aleuts). But when it was announced that hearings would be held to establish the rights of the Indians to fishing districts in southeast Alaska, the roof fell in with a bang.

The cities of Ketchikan, Sitka and Juneau were near by, and the waters involved held the fishtraps of the largest interests in the Territory. What immediately concerned them were the petitions from Hydaburg, Kake and Klawock on behalf of the Haida and Tlingit tribes which included, according to the Ketchikan Alaska Chronicle, a wealthy mining area that has produced over \$7,000,000 in wealth and a fishing industry of ten canneries and seventy-five fishtraps producing \$4,000,000 to \$5,000,000 worth of canned fish a year (plus an estimated \$2,000,000 worth of other products).

"If they can take that land and those waters," cried the whites, "what is to keep them from taking everything?"

## A Case of Winner Take All?

The excitement seemed a bit excessive until further Indian claims started coming in, and then the panic was really on. The Juneau Indians asked for all of Gastineau Channel, including the cities of Juneau and Douglas. The Ketchikan Indians claimed all Revillagigedo Island, with the city of Ketchikan and the town of Saxman. All told, these new claims involved Ketchikan, a city of 5,000 population; Wrangell with 1,100 people; Douglas with about 600, and Juneau with 7,500, including the state capital buildings and the famous Alaska Juneau gold mine. "Well, that proves it," shrieked the whites. "The Indians are certainly the original settlers. If that's the basis they're claiming it on, they can eventually take over the whole Territory."

Much to their own chagrin, the whites are on firm ground there. The courts of the United States have held repeatedly that nothing can destroy the original rights of occupancy, unless the right has been extinguished by act of Congress or has been lost by abandonment. The government itself can't do it, as witness the celebrated case of the Walapai Indians of Arizona, settled by the United States Supreme Court in December, 1941. A tract of land was given by the government to the Santa Fe railroad at the time of the building of the road (every alternate section along the right of way). The Walapais maintained that they had always lived there, had

never given any of the land to anybody, and it was theirs. The court said: You are most certainly right, Walapais—and now the Santa Fe railroad has to pay damages.

The former Commissioner of Indian Affairs, John Collier, agrees that aboriginal rights to the above-mentioned territories might be upheld by the courts but he maintains that it is "inconceivable that any court would turn over the land occupied by an established city or land on which a business has been developed. . . . At best, it might award the Indians compensation to be paid by the United States government."

Anyhow, on that basis a most beautiful fight is lined up in Alaska. On the one side are the whites standing in solid phalanx from Delegate E. L. Bartlett down to the most modest descendant of the most hard-bitten sourdough. On the other is Mr. Ickes. John Collier also was active on Mr. Ickes' side until his recent resignation as Commissioner of Indian Affairs. In between are the natives (Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts), still not clear whether they prefer to go on as they are or desire the protection of the United States government.

"Tut, tut," says Mr. Ickes, who has been in so many gang fights that he considers a brickbat a form of osculation. "They're a little excited but they'll get over it when they see they're not hurt. I have a duty under the law to see that the rights of the Indians are protected. It's part of the act and I couldn't dodge it if I wanted to."

## Down to Racial Differences

The "act" is the Wheeler-Howard Bill, which was amended in 1936 to extend to the Alaska aborigines the same rights held by the Indians of the United States. The fishing rights come under the Alaska Fishing Regulations of 1942. The whites in Alaska have patented land, deeds given them by the government; the Indians have always lived there and they have nothing legal to show for it. Big tracts have been sold to the whites around the cities, and the Indians live in so-called "native villages." They have their own schools and legally are entitled to go to Territorial schools, but, practically speaking, they don't do it. There are restaurants and saloons with signs saying: No Natives Permitted and the Army really polished it off nicely when it prohibited soldiers from associating with native girls.

That has been bad, and the matter of a livelihood has been bad, too, which brings us to the fishtraps. A fishtrap is a formidable structure consisting of heavy piling and wire webbing and is located in water of considerable depth along the shore from the high-tide line. They are legally barred in British Columbia and the states of Oregon and Washington, but they provide the greater portion of the catch in Alaska. Nobody has any legal right to a fishtrap site, and there were some gargantuan battles between rival interests in the early days, but the things cost between \$50,000 and \$100,000 to build, and those who were in the field early have a halfway right of possession to the site. Recently, a firm paid \$250,000 for a fishtrap, which shows that in practice the rights are considered as established.

But when you have a fishtrap along the shore, other fishermen have to do their best farther out with seines and lines. The competition is ruinous to the individuals farther out, and that's where the Indians are. Also, it is estimated that 95 per cent of the fishtraps are held by absentee owners, and that is a sore point in the Territory.

In the Hydaburg community the Indians have asked for 820,000 acres, but the Department of the Interior has cut that down to 222,100 acres of land and 152,900 acres of

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Collier's for March 31, 1945