



In Place of Pity

By JACK SHER

He had hurt her in the past and now, coming to her for help, he could hurt her again. But her pity was too great and she could not deny him the thing he asked

From the window Grace saw Eddie's petulant face. Hate swept through her, but she could not sustain it

PANIC sat in her stomach like a cannon ball as she watched Eddie Linden step out of his blue convertible coupé into the hot, bright glare of the California sunlight. She stood shielded from view by the rich curtains in the spacious house on the Palisades overlooking the Pacific. She was a large-boned woman, tall, with regular, almost masculine features. Her hands were very attractive, long-fingered and somehow delicate. Her wide, gray eyes were sensitive and frightened.

She watched Eddie come up the long, flagstone walk with slow, deliberate steps. His young, good-looking face was both cruel and petulant, the way she had seen it many times. She knew he would drop that look before he reached the door and that his face would wear a mask of charm. He was hatless. He wore the outfit of his profession—a soft cashmere sport coat, tan slacks, moccasin-type shoes.

Her palms were moist, her breathing difficult, when the bell rang. She walked through the hall to the front door and opened it. At the sight of his face, a hate swept through her, but she could not sustain it when he smiled.

"Hello, Grace." His voice was sweet and humble, but his eyes were not.

"Hello, Eddie."

"Do I come in?" He smiled. "Or do I stay out here in left field?"

"Come in," she answered and her voice seemed small and cringing to her.

He followed her through the house to the terrace, where lunch was waiting. They began to eat and he

was silent, his eyes avoiding hers, pretending a dreamy interest in the peaceful view of the ocean and the endless horizon.

"I hear they dropped your option, Eddie." She pushed the words toward him rapidly.

His eyes swung toward hers, careful, casual eyes. "Uh-huh," he answered. "The slash is on all over town, writers with fifteen and twenty screen credits doing nothing." He smiled. "So what? I'll lick the thing. I'll catch on somewhere."

These, she knew, were only words, having no relation to what he was thinking as he looked at her. She knew what he was thinking, almost the exact words that formed the thoughts, the script-conference reasoning and language that had become a habit with him for over a year now, ever since she had used her connections and got him the job.

Eddie, I know what you are thinking now. I know how your mind works. You're thinking of the spot you're in and you're getting panicky. All you've got is a car and a closet full of clothes. You know I can save you. You think you can make me do it.

"Why did you come back, Eddie?"

"You're still my wife, aren't you?" His voice was soft, soft as the gentle, ocean breeze moving across the terrace. "Grace—"

"I haven't been your wife for eight months, Eddie." Her words sounded like beaten things to her. "Since you walked out of here, you haven't known I existed."

"I guess you're my luck," he answered slowly. "Whenever I leave you, hon, my luck goes."

"And my luck," she said, resignedly, "was to fall in love with a heel . . ."

"If you're going to talk like that—" he said, getting up from his chair. But he did not move away from the table.

"You came back to ask me not to go through with the divorce, Eddie."

She waited, wondering what he would say this time.

Her look of quiet expectancy flushed the words out of him. His speech was boyish and persuasive. He moved around the table toward her, hopefully. She half heard the words. "We can make a going concern of our marriage again, Grace . . . darling . . . you've always been sweet . . . the terrible things I've done . . . darling . . . believe me . . . darling."

She remained motionless in the chair. He was close to her now and she began to tremble. She felt the pressure of his hand on her shoulder. From far off, she heard the sound of the telephone ringing. His face brushed against her cheek, gently.

"Don't, please don't," she said, "the telephone—"

"Let it ring."

She forced herself to rise and move away from him. She left the terrace and walked slowly through the living room into the hall. She picked up the receiver and spoke and then a voice was loud and harsh in her ear. It was Eddie's agent, Nat Dorfman.

"I can't find the guy," Nat's voice told her; "must be on a bat. Thought you might know where he is. Listen, I got a deal for him in radio. Seven-fifty per, the Jerry Brody show, a year's contract and after that, the sky's the limit. . . . I gotta find the guy. I thought you might know, Grace."

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London's Mighty Crook Trap

By COLLIE SMALL

Behind its façade of storybook fame Scotland Yard stands ready to deal with anything "Dial 999" may bring—a cat burglar in Kensington or an unidentified corpse in the Outer Hebrides

SCOTLAND YARD, a musty, dungeon-like police fortress tucked away under the turrets of London's busy Whitehall, has waged a relentless and frequently inspired campaign against indictable crime for well over 100 years. It is unquestionably the best-known police organization in the world. Yet the illusion persists that Scotland Yard men are witless chuckleheads who could not deduce their way through an ordinary crossword puzzle.

That brilliant storybook eccentric, Sherlock Holmes, is largely to blame for endowing Scotland Yard with this reputation for indelible stupidity. On foggy nights, Holmes would emerge from the house on Baker Street, sniff the blood on the night air expectantly, and leisurely make

his way to the scene of a baffling murder, where he would proceed methodically to make a fool of the poor Scotland Yard inspector assigned to the case.

"I think," Holmes would chuckle when it was all over, "this should mean a promotion for you, Lestrade."

"We shall see, sir," the inspector would say evenly, struggling to conceal his chagrin at being outwitted by the master detective.

Some mystery-story writers have tried to square things by introducing Scotland Yard men as normal human beings instead of blundering bumpkins, but the damage already done to the Yard's reputation by the amazing Holmes seems to be irreparable. More is the pity, because Scotland Yard in its time has produced operatives

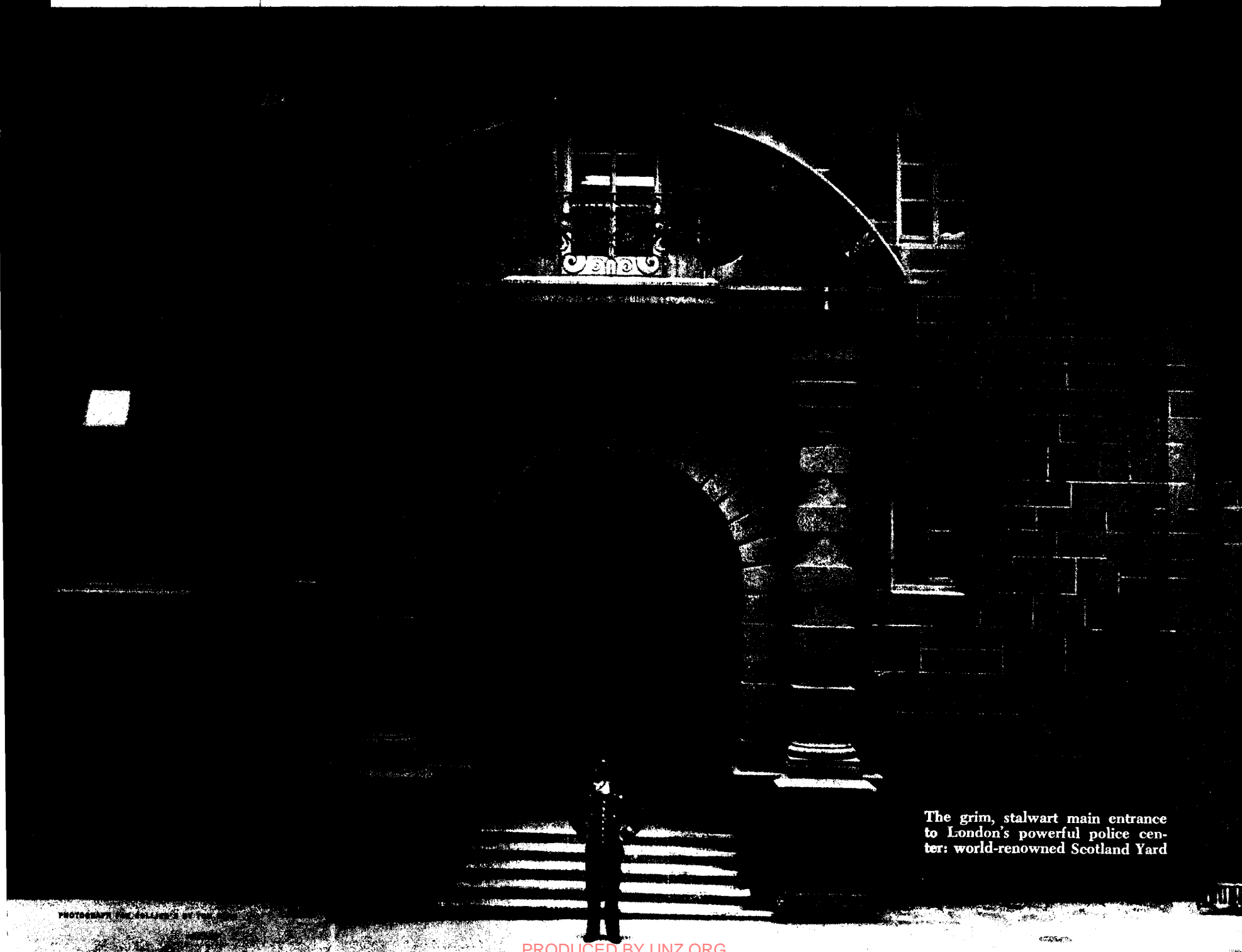
worthy of Holmes, Poirot and Vance put together.

The late Sir Bernard Spilsbury, for example, who sent an impressive number of criminals to the gallows with his scientific gleanings from a lock of hair, a speck of dust or a vagrant bruise, behaved precisely as Holmes would have behaved in similar circumstances.

Sir Bernard specialized in corpses, and his graphic lectures on the subject have actually been known to produce fainting among burly policemen. A senior inspector once described the scene at an exhumation conducted by Spilsbury.

"I walked into the room and there it was (the corpse) all laid out ready for examination. I was terribly afraid I should make a fool of myself,

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The grim, stalwart main entrance to London's powerful police center: world-renowned Scotland Yard